¶ An exhor-

tation to the diligent stu-
dye of scripture / made by Eras-
mus Roterodamus. And
translated into englisshe.

¶ An exposition into the
seuenth chaptre of the firsti pist-
le to the Corinthians.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

Actantius Firmianus/ Christen Reader (whose eloquẽce sanct Hierome doth greatlie avaunce) endeveringe hym silf to defende and maynteyne the chasten fayth and religion/ againſt the craftye and vnfaithfull gentles/ did wisshe and desyre with fervent affection to attayne the eloquence next vnto Tullyes/ cosunninge it an hygh presumptyou (as I thinke) yf he shuld have desyred equall. How be yt I truely/ yf that wisshes could eny thinge avayll'e/ at the leste while I exhorte and entyse all mortall men vnto the most holye and holsome studye of Christian wisdome/ and pure Philosophye/ wold hartelye desyre an other manner of eloquence to be gevẽ vnto me/ thẽ ever cicero had/ all though not so glorouslie painted & coloured as his was yet truely of more power & efficacite/ yee soch a vehemẽt persuasion & strength of eloquẽce wold I desyre/ as ẏ fables of old poetes have noted in mercurius/ whō they fained (as it had bene with a rodde of inchauntemẽt/ & a melodious harpe) to cast mẽ en to a sodẽ & oblivious slepe/ & againe to reyse thẽ at his awne pleasure/ depressinge some (ẏ are affected with his hevẽly armonye) in to ẏ depthe of plutos ipery. And brīginge thẽ againe out

(of all vexacions

Other soch as they ascribed to Amphion & Orpheus / for they imagine that ỹ one with his armonious harpe dyd move the stiffe stones. And that the other made to folow hi the insensible trees. Other soch as the frenshmen applye to Hercules Ogmius fanige: that he leadeth aboute all men with hys godly eloquẽce as it were with certen smale chaynes which are tied vnto his tonge and runne thorow every mannes eeres. Other soch as the doo inge old age did attribute vnto marsyas. Or els truly (because we wyll not be longe in repetynge fables) soch as Alcibiades hath graunted vnto Socrates. And the old comedye vnto pericles / whiche maye not onlye entyse and delite the eeres with a shorte and corrupcible delectacion or pleasure. But also maye leve perpetuall vnc kes and instigacyons in the myndes of the hearers / which may ravysshe and transforme them / and leve them in an other mynde then they were before. The noble musicyon Timotheus (as we reade) with his proporcioned armonye was wont to enflame Alexander the great conquerour with a fervent desyre to warre. And there have bene in tymes paste / that have counted nothinge of more power and efficacite then thenchaunstementes / which the Grekes calle epodas. Now yf there be eny soch kind of enchaunstement or charme. Yf there be eny strenghe

in muſike and armonye. Yf there be eny pleſ
aſant perſuaſion / which hath power to alſ
lecte mannes mynd in to here ſentence / the
ſame at this ceaſon / wold I gladly obtaine
to thentent that I might perſuade vnto all
men that thinge which is moſt holſome and
moſt profitable vnto them. All though it we
re better / yee and more convenient to deſyre
that Chriſt him ſilfe (whos cauſe I entreaſ
te) wold ſo tempre the ſtringes of oure inſ
ſtrument / that this ſonge may proſperouſly
entyſe and move / the mindes of all men. For
this poore ſeruice nede but lytle the painted
argumentes and coloured concluſions of ỹ
Rhetoryens / for nothinge ſo ſurely can
garniſſhe and performe that / that we deſyſ
re as the truthe it ſilf / which whē it is moſt
plaine and ſimpleſt is of moſt vehemente ef
ficacite in perſuadinge. Neither do I counte
it beſt at this tyme to revocate and call to
memorye the ſorowfull complainte (all' th
ough it be not new yet alas it is to true / and
I thinke it could never be more iuſtlye ve
refied then at this preſent tyme) that ſyth
with ſoch great diligence all mennes invē
cyons are ſtudyed and commended / yet on
ly this immortall fontayne of Chriſtes pure
philoſophye / is deſpyſed and mocked of ſo
many / yee and cheflye of them whiche pro
feſſe to be the heddes and examples of the
Chriſten / few there are that ſeke theſe hol

some springes of helthe/ And yet they that seke them/do so vnfruetfully loke vpon them Adding their awne glosses and opinions that they seame rather to troble and defile these springes of liffe/then to drinke of the swetely/that they might have in them silf floddes of livīge water/rūninge in to everlastinge liffe/which both shuld be to the glorye of god/and profitte of the Christen.

We se that in all other sciences which by mannes polycy have bene invented/there is no misterye so darke and secrete/ but that the quyckenes of oure witte hath attayned it/there is nothinge so harde/but that diligent labour hath subdued it vnto him. how chaūceth it thē ỹ we embrace not/with faythfull hartes (as it is convenient) this pure philosophy/syth we professe the holy name of Christ: Platos adherentes/Pithagoras scholars: The Academikes/Stoikes Epicures. The fautores of Aristotle and disciples of Diogenes/know grownd-ly yee and by harte/the traditions of their awne secte/And fight most fersly for them Redye rather to dye/thē to forsake their patrone and author. And why do not we moch more geve oure mindes and studyes/ vnto oure master and prince Christ/who wold not count it a foule thinge/ yee and a great rebuke to him that professeth Aristotles philosophye/if he be ignorant what his ma-

ster iudgeth/concerninge the cawses of the thunder/of the raynbow/of the erthquakes/And of soch othernaturall causes: which though they were knowne or vnknowne/Make not the that laboure to knowe them happye nor vnhappye. And shulde we which are so many wayes consecrated/ and with so manye sacramētes bownde vnto christ: thinke it no shame awhitte/to be ignorant in his scripture and doctrine/which geve vs moste sure comforte and felicite: And which are the anker of the soule both sure and stable/preservinge vs from perisshinge in all tempestes of temptation: How be it/for what entent vse we this comparison/sith it is extreme madnes to compare Christ with Zeno and Aristotle/and his hevenlye doctrine/with their trifelinge traditions.

Let them fayne and imagyne vnto the captaynes of their secte as moch as they may/yet as moch as they will. Yet trulye. Only this master ād teacher/came from heven/which alone could teach sure thinges/ beinge the everlastinge wisdom af the father which alone hath taught holsom thinges/ beinge the fundation of all mannes helthe: which alone hath fulfilled to the vttermost poynte/al that he hath taught: and which alone may parforme/what so ever he hath promised. If any thinge had bene brought

from the chaldes or the Aegiptions / we wold the more gredelye desyre to know it / be cause it came farre / and from a strange contrye (yee it is the more deare and precious that comethe from a farre) And we are often times so grevouslye vexed aboute the dreame and phantasye of a folyssh felow (not only with smalle profitte / but also with great losse of time) that it is shame to reherse it. I wonder ẏ this desire doth not likwisse ticle and entyse the Christen hartes / which know wel ynough (as the thinge is in dede) that this holsome doctrine came not from Aegipte or Syria. But from the very heven and sete of god. Why do we not thinke with oure selves on this maner / It must nedes be a new and mervelous kind of learninge / syth that god him silf which was immortalle / became a naturalle man and mortalle / descendinge from the right hand of his father / in to this wretched worlde / to teach it vnto vs / It muste nedes be a highe and excellent thinge / and no trifle / which that hevenlye and mervelous master came to teach openlye. Why do we not go aboute to know / serch ad trye out with a godly curiosyte / this fruetfulle Philosophye? Sith that this kind of wisdome beinge so profounde and inscrutable that vtterlye it damneth & confoundeth as folyssh alle the wisdome of this world May be gadered out of so smalle bokes as

out of moste pure sprynges/And that with moch lesse laboure/thē the doctrines of Aristotle out of so many brawlinge and contentious bokes/Or of soch infinite commentaryes which do so moch dissent/ Besides the incōperable frute which nedeth not here to be spoken of. Nether is it nedefull that thou be clogged with so many irrome and babelinge sciences/The meanes to this philosophye are easy and at hand/ do only thy diligence to bringe a godly and redy minde/ chefly endewed with plaine and pure faithe Be only desyrous to be instructe/and cōfirmable to this meake doctrine/And thou hast moch profited. Thy master and instructor (that is the spirite of god) will not from thē be absent/which is never more gladly present with eny/then with simple and playne hartes. Mennes doctrines and traditions (beside the promessinge of false felicite) do confounde many mēnes wittes/ and make them clene to despayre be cause they are so darke/crafty/and cōtentious/But this delectiable doctrine doth applye her self equally to all men submittinge her self vnto vs/ while we are childer/ tempeninge her tune after oure capacyte/feadinge vs with milke/ forberinge/norisshinge/sufferinge/ and doinge all thinges/vntill we may encrease/ & wex greatter in Christ/And contrarywisse it is not so lowe and depressed vnto the weake

but it is as high and mervelous to the par-
fecte/Yee ẏ more thou wadest in the tresurs
of this sciēce/the farther thou arte from at-
tayninge her mageste. To the childer she is
lowe and playne/and to greatter/she sea-
meth above all capacite. She refuseth no a-
ge/no kinde/no fortune/no state and condi-
tion.

In so moch that the sonne is not more
comen and indifferent to all men/then this
doctrine of Christe. She forbeddeth no man
at all: Except he abstayne willinglye/envy-
inge his awne profitte. And trulye I do gre
atly dissent from those men/whiche wold
not that the scripture of Christ shuld be trā-
slated in to all tonges/that it might be re-
ade diligently of the private and seculare
men and women/Other as though Christ
had taught soch darke and insensible thin-
ges/that they could scante be vnderstonde
of a few divines. Or els as though the pithe
and substance of the christen religion consi-
sted chefly in this/ẏ it be not knowne. Par-
aventure it were moste expedient that the co-
uncels of kinges shuld be kept secret/but
Christ wold that his councelles and misteri-
es shuld be sprede abrode as moch as is pos
sible. I wold desire that all women shuld re-
ade the gospell and Paules epistles/and I
wold to god they were translated in to the

tonges of all men/So that they might not only be read/and knowne/of the scotes and wyshmen/But also of the Turkes and sarracences/Truly it is one degre to good lusage/yee ẏ first(I had almoste sayde the chefe)to have a litle sight in ẏ scripture/though it be but a grosse knowledge/and not yet cõsũmate) Be it in case that some wold laugh at it/yee and that some shuld erre and be deceaved)I wold to god/ẏ plowmã wold singe a texte of the scripture at his plowbeme/And that the wever at his lowme/with this wold drive away the rediousnes of tyme. I wold the wayfaringe man with this pastyme/wold expelle the werynes of his iorney. And to be shorte I wold that all the communication of the christen shuld be of the scripture/for in a maner soch are we oure selves/as oure daylye tales are. Let every man prospere/and attayne that he may/And declare effectuously his mind vnto his neghbure/Let not hi that cometh behinde envye the foremoste/Let also the formoste affecte him that folowerh/ever exhortinge him not despayre. Why do we applye only to certayne the professiõ//which is indifferent and comen to all men?. Nether truly is it mete(syth that baptime is equally comẽ vnto all Christen men/wher

in consisteth the first profession of the chris
sten religion. Sith other sacramentes
are not private / and to conclude. Sith the
rewarde of immortalite partaineth indyffe
rently vnto all men / that only the doctrine
shuld be banisshed from the seculare / and
possessed only of a few whom the comunalte
call deuines / or religious parsons. And yet
I wold that these (all though they be but a
small company in comparison to the hole
numbre which bere the name of Christ and
are called Christen) I wold (I saye) desyre
with all myn harte / that they were in dede
soch as they are called / for I am a frayde
that a man may synde some amonge the di
uines whiche are far vnworthy their na
me and title / that is to saye / which spea
ke wordly thinges and not godly: yee and
amonge the religious whiche professe the
pouerte of Christ. And to despise the worl
de / thou shalt finde more wordlye pleasure
and vanyte / then in all the world be sydes.
Hym do I counte a true diuine which not
with craftye and sotle reasons. But that in
harte / countenance / eyes / and lyffe doth te
ach / to despyse riches. And that a Christen
ought not to put confidence in the sucker /
and helpe of this world: But only hole to
hange on heuen. Not to auenge iniurye.
To pray for them that say euyll by vs. To
do good agaynst euyll. That all good men

shuld be loved and norisshed indifferent-
ly/as the membres of one bodye. That evyll
men yf they can not be reformed and brou-
ght in to a good ordre ought to be suffered.
That they whiche are despoyled of theyr
goodes /and put from their possessions/
And morne in this world/are verye blyssed
and not to be lamented. That death is to be
desyred of the Christen / syth it is nothinge
elles/But a goynge to immortalyte. Yf eny
man beynge enspired with the holy goste do
prechand teach these and soch other thin-
ges /If eny man exhorte / entyse / and bol-
den his neghbore vnto these thinges / he ys
a very and true devine / though he be a we-
ver/yee though he dygge and delve. But he
that accomplissheth ād fulfylleth these thī-
ges in his liffe and maners / he verely is a
great doctor. Paraventure a nother whiche
is not Christen shall more subtyllye dispu-
te / by what maner the Angelles vnder-
stond: How be it to persuade and exhor-
te / that we may here lyve pure and imma-
culate from all vices and iniquites. And to
lede an angelles liffe / that is the office and
deutye of a Christen and devine. If eny man
wold obiecte/and say that these are grosse/
and vnsavery thinges. To hym wold I
none other wysse answere. But that Christ
chefly hath taught these thinges. And that
the Apostles to these have vs exhorted.

This learninge and doctrine be it never so vnsauerye hath brought vs forthe so many good christen/and so thike swarmes of faithfull martyrs. This vnlearned(as they cal leit)philosophy/hath subdued vnder her lawes the most noble princes so many kingdoms/so many nations: whiche thinge no kinges power. Nother learninge of the philosophers was ever able to bringe to passe: Nother will I resist thē but that they maye dispute their profounde and sotle questions (yf it please them)amonge the more perfecte/ how be it the rude multitude of the christen may be comforted/ be cause truly thapostles did never teach soch thinges. Whether they knewe them or no I wold other men shuld iudge.

But truly yf that the princes for their parte wold remembre them selves/and go aboute to fulfyll with purenes of lyvinge/ this humble and rude learninge (as they call it) If the preachers in their sermones wold avaunce this doctrine/ exhortinge all men vnto it/ and not to their avne phantasyes ād imaginacions. If scolemasters wold instructe their chyldren rather with thys symple scyence then with the wittye tradicyons of aristotle and averroys. Then shuld the Christente be more at quyetnes. And not be disturbed wyth soch perpetuall stormes of dissentyon and warre. Then shuld thys

vnreasonable desyre of avarice / which appetyth riches insatiablye whether it be right or wronge / be somedealle aswaged / and cease of his rage. Then shulde these contentious pleatinges / which now in all thinges admixte them selves / have an ende. For no man wold resiste evyll / and to be shorte. Then shuld we not differ only in title and certen ceremonyes from the hethen and vnfaythfull. But rather in the pure conversation of our liffe. And no doute in these thre degrees of men / that is to saye. In princes and officers which are in their stede. In bisshopes and other prestes which / are their vicars. And in them that bringe vpe the tender youth / which are formed and reformed even as their master entyseth them Doth chefly consiste the hole power other to encreasse the christian religion. Or elles to restore it againe which hath longe bene indecayed. Now yf these wold a whyle seclude theyr awne private busynesse and lyfte vpe their hartes with a pure entent vnto christe seakynge only hys glorye / and the profyte of theyr neghbore / we shulde severely wyth in few yeares / a true and godly kinde of Christen springe vp in everye place / which wold not only in ceremonies / disspitions / and titles professe the name of Christ. But in their very harte and true conversatiō of levinge. By this armure shulde

we moch soner prevaile agaynst the vnfa-
ythfull/and ennymyes of Christ/then with
strenghte violence/and threatteninges. Let
vs ioyne to gedder all armyes/powers/and
might of swerde/yet is there nothinge strō-
ger thē the trueth. We can not calle eny mā
a platoniste/vnles he have reade the workes
of plato. Yet call we them Christen/yee and
devines/which never have reade the scrip-
ture of Christ. Christ sayeth/he that loveth
me doth kepe my sainges/this is the know-
lege and marke whiche he hath prescribed.
Therfore yf we be true Christen men in ou-
re hartes/yf we beleve vnfanedly that he
was sent downe frō heven to teach vs soch
thinges as the wisdome of ẏ philosophers
could never attayne If faythfully we truste
or loke for soch thinges of him/as no word-
ly prince (be he never so rich) can geve onto
vs: why have we eny thinge in more reverē-
ce and authorite/then his scripture/worde/
and promisse/which he lefte here among vs
to be oure consolacyon? Why recovnte we
eny thinge of gravite or wisdom/which dis-
senteth frō his doctrine? Why in this hevēly
and mistieallē learninge do we countre/and
discant runnīge more at ryote/Thē the co-
men and porophane intervretors/in the cy-
ville lawe/or bokes of Phisike? Wyndinge
oure selves in it as in a tryfelinge game/or
matter of smalle substance/commentynge/

tossinge and wrestinge it even as it cometh to oure tonges ende. We apply and drawe/ this heavenly and vnsported doctrine vnto oure luste. And measure it after our veyne conversacion accordinge vnto the maner of the lesbes which bende their rule to the facyon of their stone or tymbre/ And cut not their stone and tymbre to the rule. And be cause we will not be seme ignoraunte in any thinge/ but rather that we have reade and know moch/ we do (I dare not saye) corrupte these frutefull sprynges/ but that no man can denye we appropriate vnto a few men that thinge which Christ wold have most comē. And this kinde of philosophye doth rather consist in the affectes of the mynde/ then in sotle reasons. It is a liffe rather then a disputacyon. It is an inspiracion rather then a science. And rather a new transformacion/ then a reasoninge. It is a seldome thinge to be a well learned man / but it is lefull for every man to be a true chaste. It is lefull for every mā to lyve a godly lyffe/ yee and I dare be bold to say it is lefull for everye man to be a pure divine. Now doth every mānes mynd incline vnto that whiche is holesome and expedient for his nature. And what other thinge ys thys doctrine of Christ whiche he calleth the new regeneracyon / But a restorynge or reparynge of oure nature whiche in hys fyrst creacyon was good? I mā

may fynde verye many thinges in the gentiles bokes/which are agreable vnto this doctrine. Although no mā hath shewed it so absolutely. Nether yet with soche efficacite as christ him silf/ for there was never soch a rude and grosse secte of philosopye/whiche did teach that mānes felicite rested on monye/there was none so shamles to affirme ye the cheffe pointe & ground of goodnes consisted in this worldly honoure and pleasure The stoikes did knowledge that no mā might worthely be called wisse excepte he were a good ād vertuous lyver/nether that eny thinge was verelye good and honest/but only vertue. And that nothinge was evill and to be abhorred. But only vice and sinne/ Socrates(as plato maketh mention)did teach by many reasons/that iniurye ought not to be avenged with iniurye. He taught also ye sith the soule is immortall/they are not to be moned for which departe hence/yf they have leved well/be cause they are gone in to a more prosperous liffe. Finally he taught ād exhorted all men to subdue the affections of their bodyes. And to applye their soules to the contemplacyon of those thinges/whiche truly are immortall/ although they be not sene with these bodelye eyes. Aristotle writeth in hys politikes that there can nothinge be so swete and delycyous to man But that at somtyme yt doth displease hym on-

ly vertue excepte. The Epicure graunteth that there can be nothinge delectable and pleasante in this liffe except the mynde and conscience frō whence all pleasure sprunge be clere/and with out grutche of sinne/ be sydes that there have bene some/ that have fulfylled a great parte of thys doctrine. And chefly of all Socrates/ Diogenes/ād Epicretus/ how be it sith Christ him silfe hath both taught and also done these thinges more consummatly then eny other/ ys yt not a mervelous thinge that these thinges are not onlye vnknowen of them which professe the name of Christ. But also to be despised of them/ yee and to be made a laughinge stocke: Yf there be eny thinge that goethe more nere to Christianite/ let vs then disanulle these thinges/ād folow them. But sith there is no nother thinge that can make a true Christen man/ Why then do we recounte this immortall doctrine more abrogate and out of vse then the bokes of Moyses? The first poynte of Christianite is to knowe what Christ hath taught. The next is to do there after and to fulfyll it as nygh as god geveth vs grace/

Nether thynke I that eny man wyll counte hym silfe a feythfull Christen/ because he can despute wyth a crafty/

and tedious perplexite of wordes/ of relacyons/ quiddityes/ and formalites/ But in that he knowledgeth and expresseth in dedes those thinges which Christ both taught and accomplissed. Nether speake I thys to discommende their studye & labour/ whiche have exercysed their wittes in these sotle invencyons (for I wold offend no man) But rather be cause I beleve (as the matter is in deede) that the very pure and naturall physosophye of Christ/ can be gathered out so fruteffully of no place/ as out of the Gospels and epistles of the apostles/ in whiche yf a man will studye devoutelye attendinge more to prayer/ the arguinge) desynnge rather to be made a new mā then to be armed with scriptures vnto contentiō/ he with out doute shall finde/ that there is nothinge pertaynynge vnto mannes felicyte/ other dales vnto ony operacion convedient vnto this presente liffe. But it is declared/ discussed/ and absolutely touched. Yf we go aboute to lerne ony thinge/ wherfore shall an other master and instructor more please vs then christ him silf? Yf we requyre a rule and forme to lyve after/ why do we rather embrace an other example then the very first copy and patrone whyche is christe hym silfe? Yf we desyre an holesome medycyne agaynst the grevous and noysome/ lustes or appetytes/ of oure myndes. Why take we not here the

most fruitefull remedye? If we appete to quycken and refresshe with readinge / oure dull and fayntinge mynde. I pray the whe-re shall we fynde soch quycke and firye spar-kyls? If we covete to withdrawe oure min-des frō the tedious cares of this liffe / why seake we eny other delectable pastymes? why had we lever leme the wisdom of Christes doctryne out of mēnes bokes / then of christ him silfe? Whyche in thys scripture doth chefly performe that thinge whiche he pro-mysed vnto vs when he sayd / that he wold contynew with vs vnto the ende of worlde. For in thys hys testament he speaketh / bre-theth / ād lyveth amōge vs / in a maner mo-re effectuallye / then when hys bodye was presently conversante in this worlde. The Jewes nether sawe ne hearde so moch. As thou mayst dayly both here and se in the scripture of Christe / there wanteth nothyn-ge / but that thou bringe the heares and eyes of fayth where with he maye be harde and perceaved. What a mervelous worlde ys thys? We kepe the letters which are writ-ten from oure frynde. We kysse them / and bere them aboute with vs. We reade them over twyse or thryse: And how many thou-sandes are there amonge the Christen why-che are extemed of greate litterature / And yet have not once in their lyv es Read over the Gosples and Epistles of the Apostles.

Mahumetes adherētes are all well instructe in their awne secte/And the Jewes vnto this daye even from their tender age studye diligently their Moses / Why do not we soch honour vnto Christe embrasinge his preceptes which bringe eternall liffe: They that professe saynt Benedictes institution(which is a rule both made of a mā that was but of small learninge and also wryten vnto the seculare/ rude/ ād vnlearned)do observe their example/lerne it by harte/and drinke it in to their hartes. Saynt Justyns adherentes are not ignorant in their rule/Saynt Francisses fryers do knowe observe/and avaunce their patrones preceptes/yee and carye them aboute with them whether so ever they go Insomoche that they thinke not themselves in savete except their boke be with them. Why set they more by their rule which was writen of a man then the hole Christente by the holy scriptures/which Christ did equall ye preach vnto all men/which we have all professed in baptime: And to conclude, which is most holy amonge all other doctrines/and none to be compared with it/all though thou hepe sex hundreth to gedder/and I wold to god ȳ as Paule did write that the lawe of Moses had no glorye in comparison to the glorye of

the gospell that succeded after it/ that even so the evangelyes ād epistles were extemed of the Christen so holy or hadde in soch reverence/ that the doctrynes of men in respecte of them might seame nothinge holye/ I am cōtēte that everye mā avaunce his doctor at his awne pleasure/ let thē extolle Albarte/ Alexander/ Saynt Thomas/ Aegidius/ Richarde/ and Occam/ I will diminysshe no manes fame no glorye / Nother yet resiste and reprove the olde maner of studye/ Let them be wittye/ sotle/ And in a maner above capacyte or angelicall/ yet trulye must they nedes knowledge that these are most true/ vndouted / and frutefull. Paule and saynte Johan will that we iudge the spretes of prophetes whether they are of god or not/ and Saynt Augustyne readinge all other mennes bokes with iudgement/ requirethe none nother authoryte to his bokys Only in the scripture when he can not attayne a thinge/ he submitteth him sylf vntoit/ And oure doctor (which is Christ) was not alowed by the scoles of devines/ but of the hevenly father his awne and goodly voyce beringe wytnes/ and that twyse/ first at Jordane as he was baptised/ & after in his trās

figuratiō on the mounte thabor / sayeinge/ This is my welbeloved sonne in whom I am pleased/ heare you him O this sure authoryte: which (as they saye) hath no cōtradictiō/ what signifieth this/ heare you him: Trulye that he is only the true teacher and instructore/ and that we ought only to be his disciples. Now let every man with their hole affectiō prayse their authores as moch as they will/ yet was this voyce with outē naye only spoken of Christ oure savyoure/ vpon whom descended the holy gost in lykenesse of a dove which did confirme the testimonye of the hevenly father. Wyth this sprete was Peter endued vnto whom the high shepard Christ/ committed his shepe once/ twyse yee thryse to be fed & noryssbed/ meaninge trulye no nother thinge but that he shuld instructe them/ with the hevenly fode of Christian doctrine. In Paule/ Christ semed in a maner new borne agayne/ whom he him silf called a chosen wessel/ ād a pure preacher of his name and glorye. Saynt Johan expressed in his learninge that thinge whiche he had souked or dronke out of the holye fontayne of Christes boosome. What like thinke is there in duns (I wold not you shuld thinke that I speake it of envye) what like thinge is there in saynt Thomas: how be it I commende this mannes holinesse/ And merveill at the sotle wit and

iudgement of the other. Why do we not all applye oure diligente studye in these greate authors / I meane Christ / Peter / Paule / and Johan: Why bere we not aboute these in oure bosomes: Why have we them not ever in oure handes: Why do we not hūte / seke / ād serch oute these thinges with a curious diligence: Why geve we a greater portion of oure liffe to the studye of Averrois / then to the Evāgely of Christ: why do we (in a maner) consume al oure age in the decrees of men / and vayne opinions which are so contrarye and dissentinge amōge them selves: Be it in case they be greate devines that made soche constitutions yet notwitstādinge only in Christes worde consisteth the exercyse / and inurance / of him which before god is reputed for a greate devine. It is mete that we all which have professed the name of Christ (at the leste if we have promised with mind ād harte) that we be instructe with the doctryne of Christ / beinge yet tender infantes in oure parentes armes / and wanton children at oure nurses tete / for it is emprēted most depe / And cleveth most surely / which the rude and unformed shelle of oure soule dothe first receave and learne. I wold oure first and unformed speache shuld sounde of Christe / I wolde oure ignorāte childhod shuld be enformed with Christes evāgelye / and to the I wold Christ shuld be

swetely taught/ yͤ they might be enflamed to
love him/ And that after they shuld procede
by a litle and a litle crepinge by the grounde
vntyll that by insensible incrementes they
spunge vp to be stronge in Christ. Other mēs
nes traditions are soche/ that many repen-
te them selves because they have spente so
moch studye and labour vpon them. And ofs-
ten it chaunceth that they which have moste
manfully fought thorow all their liffe even
vnto the death/ to defende mennes doctri-
nes and decrees/ Yet in the poynte of dethe
have caste awaye their shilde/ and have cle-
ne dissented from their authors secte. But
blissed is he whom death assayleth/ if his
harte be hole occupied in this holesome do-
ctrine. Let vs therfore all with fervent desy-
re thriste after these spirituall sprīges/ Let vs
embrace them. Let vs be studiously conver-
sante with thē. Let vs kysse these swete wor-
des of Christ with a pure affection Let vs be
new transformed into them for soche are ou-
re maners as ouse studyes be yee (and to be
shorte) let vs dye in them he that can not at-
tayne them (but who is he that can not if he
will him silf) yet at the leste let him submit-
te him silfe vnto thē recountinge thē very ho
ly/ & as yͤ storehouse/ or treasurye/ of gods
des awne mīde frō whēce cometh furthe all
goodnes. If a mā wold shew vs a steppe of
Christes foote/ Goodlorde/ how wold we

knele and worshuppe it: And why do we not rather honoure his qwycke and lyvelye image which is most expressiye contayned in these bokes: If a man wold bringe vnto vs Christes coote whether wold we not runne hedlynge that we might once kisse it: How be it if thou bringe oute his coote / sherte / shoes / ād all his housolde stuffe / yet is there nothinge that doth more truly and expressly represente Christe / then the gospels and epistles. We garnisshe or adorne an image of wod or stone with gold and precious stones for the love of Christe. But why are not these sethinges rather garnisshed with gold and gemmes / yee and more precyously / yf so eny thinge can be more precious then they / syth they represent moch more presentlye Christ vnto vs / then eny ymage cā do: As for ymages / what thinge can they expresse but the figure of his bodye: yf they expresse that. But the evangely doth represent and expresse the qwicke and levinge ymage of his most holy minde / yee and Christe him silf speakinge / healinge / deyenge / rysinge agayne / and to conclude all partes of him. In so moch that thou coulde ste not so playne and frutefullye see him / All though he were presente before thy bodlye eyes.

Amen.

The cause why the apostle did write this presente chapter was this. The Counthiās whiche dyd receave the doctrine of Christe ād so did become his servantes/ and specyally they whiche before had folowed ỹ Jewes wayes/ did observe both the Euangely/ and also the lawe of Moses. Now hadde Moses commaunded that every man shulde be maried. So that a man by the lawe of matrimony shulde be associate and kepe compeny with a womā/ād the womā with a man. To lyve severall or single was thē cōdempned/ as a state baren and vnfrutefull. The cause was this. God hadde promysed in the olde testamente that Christe shulde descende of the seede of Abrahā. Now did no body yet knowe what parsones were the seede that shulde begette him. It was therfore necessaryly required that the Hebrues all/ which were Jewes shulde be conjugate in mariage for honore ād love of this seede/ and to engendre children vntill the advente and cominge of Christe.

For this cause didde the Counthyans demaunde/ whether they were bounde to kepe the aforesayde lawe? And whether yt was lefull for them to abyde ād lyve vnmaryed/

whē they had love and desyer vnto chastite? And moste specially for so moche as by reasone of the euangely many other lawes were cassate/and anulled/and put vnto mānes liberte to kepe them/or elles not to kepe them. Their feble and weyke consciences cowde vnnethes leave the lawe of Moses/where vnto they hadde so longe time ād many ages bene accustomed. Vnto this doth sainte Paule here make them answeare saing that this is not only lefulle/but also good and profitable/yf so a man mindeth to lyve chaste/and hath love and delyte to the same. Not with standinge he doth here intreate of this mater both diligently and also warely/myxtynge and intermedlinge alle wayes matrimony.

It is good for a man not tō touche a woman. Nevertheleſſe to avoyde fornicacyon. Let every mā have his wife. And let every woman have her husbande.

¶ Consider well the wordes/and beholde howe shortly he breaketh of/making digression from his firste sentence. Yt is sayeth he good/yf a man do not touche a woman. But in this he doth nother bydde/ne forbidde eny man so for to do/but incontinent

he hyeth hym vnto matrimony. As yf he dyd feare soche a good thinge to be rare ād vnwonte / and that in tyme cominge wolde turne and be chaunged into fornicacyon. Affirminge that for love of avoydinge fornicacyon every man ought to have his wife Therfore this is his firste sentence or conclusion. That whosoever in him silfe doth not fele this godly ād good thinge I meane chastite: but doth fele and perceave incontinency / Vnto him (I saye) is here commaundemente gyven / that he be maryed. And this commaundemēte oughteste thou to receave as the commaundement of God and not of man. Then here of doth folowe that no parsone may make a vowe or promyse to lyve chaste and single. And that no parson is bounde to kepe and performe eny suche vowe once made / but rather to fordo vnkepe and breake them. When in him silfe he doth not fynde nor fele this precyous and goodly gyfte of chastite / but knoweth him silfe prone to luste and incontinencye. For suche a vowe is playnly made againste this commaundemente. But againste the commaundemente of God may no vowe be made therfore yf eny suche vowe be made / he that shall observe and kepe it ys damnabyll / yee and by the lawe of god all redy condemned.

This thouchynge of women have some parsones diffined ād compased moche straytly. So ỹ they dare not touche a womans hande nor skynne. Moreover they have founde and imagined many both statutes ād ceremonyes/by whiche they might kepe thē selves from the company of women. So ỹ they shulde nother see nor heare them/ supposinge that by suche meanys they have made royall provision to lyve chaste/ ād vnmaryed. And thus they that fyrste dydde bylde monasteryes and abbyes thought that yonge men myght be kepte pure & chaste/yf they ware absente from yonge women/and lykewyse yonge womē from mē. But vnto what prefe and how fortunatly that thynge hath come to passe/and what place therby hath bene geven to Sathan/it were horrible both to be spoken/and also to be hearde of.

Suche parsones be as men are wonte to saye comonly more blinde then a betle. They wene that chastyte maye be dryvē in to a mā by outwarde meanes. When not withstāding/ this hygh and hevenly gifte muste springe out from the inner partes of the harte. For all ỹf yt be manifesily knowne that lust̄e is inflammed when man and woman do come to gether/ Yet have they therfore not made all gates so royall a provision as gaynste luste/as they pretende/in that they are kepte separate from women/ ād the wo-

men from men/for what avayleth me to see no woman/ne heare/nother yet touche hyr: yf my herte swymme fulle of them: yf in thought it cleveth vnto them both daye and nyght: Yf it ymagine and purpose more fylthines/then eny man is bolde to do: And what doth it profite to sperre and close a yonge woman/ that she can have no liberte nother to see ne heare a yonge man / when hyr harte with out ceasinge doth morne and sygh after suche one both dayes and nyghtes:

The harte muste be geven vnto chastite. Elles all our enforsemente labour and diligence shall be vnto vs grevous and paynfull as helle and other like tormētes. Wherfore this saying of Paule muste nedes be vnderstande in sprete and in harte/on this wise. That he shall be sayed not to touche a woman / which with desyre of his harte / and with his awne proper wille doth outwardly kepe his body from women. And not he that is compelled outwardly to abstaine or kepe from women/inwardly in harte being fulle of luste and love towardes them. But suche are dissemblers ād hypocrites/whose clennes and chastite glistereth before the worlde/but afore god it is loste and damnable /yee it is doble leecherye/for sayntc pauls sayinge is frely spretuall. Wherfore it requireth a fre sprete/ād in a fre sprete it mus

ste be takē & receaved. But hypocrytes receave yt grudginly/making therof a dedde letter/& a grevous lawe/that dryveth ād cōpelleth thē. And so they make dānable & fayned chastite by outwarde shunnīge & avoidīge frō womē dolorous & paynfulle. Marke now whatkyn soulesleers they be which so entise and provoke folisshe youth to vowe outwarde chastite causinge and compellinge them to norisshe with in them inwardly hydden malyce and evyll/takinge no cōsyderaciō with them selves/whether the parsones whom they thus do entyse and move be lyke wise with harte and desyer sturred vnto the same/that ys to wytt vnto chastite or single livinge. But the more harde and paynfull yt ys to man/the more noble and precious do they wene that yt ys before god lyke wyse as yt ys wonte to be in other exterior hurtes/dāmages/and vexaciōs of ẏ body. And they do not see ẏ this evill of strayned and vnwillfull cōtinēcy/& exterior payne or grefe of the body be no lesse differente then heven and erthe. For as touchinge other evilles/and grefis they may be endured and suffered wyth a meri conscience wyth out synne/and they do payne the body only But this evill and troble ys subiecte and in dawnger of sinne. Be cause yt can in no wyse be endured with a mery conscience. For yt ys synne and vnright wisnes in yt selfe.

Wherfore this evill of vnwilfull chastite can by no medicine be holpen and healed/ onles when a man ys ridde from dawnger of sinne. Whiche can be by no nother waies then by the healpe and remedy of mariage. But other exterior grefes or trobles concerninge mānes body maye be holpen by pacience/ all though a man be never ridde from them.

And in this maner willeth sainte Paule that saieng to be vnderstande. Yt ys good for a man not to touche a woman &c. So that this worde/ good/ be not vnderstande ne spoken of merite and deservinge before god. As though an vnmaried bodye were better a fore hym thā one ẏ ys maried lyke as before time sainte Hierome hath this texte expowned. For yt concerneth only faith/ and no dede or worke. And yt ys spoken of temporalle tranquillite / and quietnesse of this life. Whiche a single or vnmaried parsone hath before one that ys wedded and maried. For one that ys single shall be quite and free from all miseries/ vexacion/ and drudgery / that befalle in wedloke or mariage. And for to telle yow shortly yt ys a ioyfulle lovely precious and goodly gifte (yf so a man hath yt verily given him) to lyve wyth a gladde harte and mynde

ſyngle and chaſte. But Paule hym ſylfe ſhall here after excellētly deſcrybe vnto yow what he entendeth by ſuche goodneſſe. For yt was not ſyttyng for hym that ſo dyd commende virginite and ſyngle lyvynge/to leave them with out conſolacyon/ whych there vnto were geven with their very mynde ād wyll. Neverthelesſe thys muſte yow graunte me/that a wyfe and maryed woman maye be better afore god thean a vyrgyn. All be yt ſhe in hyr ſtate do ſuffer many paynes troubles and adverſytes/and the virgyn or maye de hath moche ioye and tranquillyte/paſſynge hyr age in reſte and quyetnes.

Therfore thys ys the ſentēce or meaninge of Paule/Yt ys good for a man not to touche a woman. Nother ys yt eny offenſe now in the tyme of the newe teſtamente to lyve with out a wyfe and chyldre/as yt was in the tyme of the olde teſtamente/ but yt is good as here wytneſſeth Paule for a mā not to touche a woman. That ys to ſaye. A man vnto whom ys gevē of god/that he cā gladly with hys very harte and wyll abyde ſyngle/the ſame man may leade a quyet lyfe. Thys doth reporte the comō proverbes/that mē vſe to ſpeake. Suche as be thes/ Be thou maryed o fole (doth on ſaye vnto an other) and thy ioye ſhall ſhortly have an ende. Alſo/maryage ys a ſhorte ioye and a longe ſorowe/and ſuche other lyke. Whyche all do

well agree with this place of Paule / Yt is good for a man not to touche a woman. Therfore dyd Moses also commawnde in the lawe that a man newly maryed shulde be quyte and fre from all publike charges by the space of an whole yeare / ẏ he myght have ioye and make mery with hys wyfe / no ther shulde he be called to goo in warfare / nother to beare eny charge or office. As thou gh Moses shuld saye / he shall lyve a yearē in gladnesse / and after he shall suffer troble sorowe and angwysshe.

But yf yt be not gevē a man to lyve with his very harte and mynde chaste or vnmary ed. Yt is better for hym to take a wyfe to be hys cōpanyon. Ye there is no thynge elles at all lefte or remayninge / that maye ease ād healpe the / excepte honest ād chaste matri- mony. Wherfore where it ys not geven a mā to enioye and vse the cōmodytes of syngle lwinge and chastite. It is necessarye to geve him silf vnto the troble / paynes / and vexa- tions of mariage. For it ys alwaye better to leade a miserable or sory lyfe with out sinne in mariage / then to lyve ioyfully in the fou- le sinne of lecherye vnmaryed. But there is no body that wille gladly put them selves into suche paynes and sorinesse. And ther- fore doth well nygh every man for his par- te abhorre wedlocke. Wherfore it is a co- mon vsed by worde. He mustebe hardye

that shall mary a wyfe. And with out sayle he had nede to be very hardy yet. Nother ys there/eny parsone that leveth more blessydly or quietly then a pure christian/ whiche beyng ledde and gyded by faith can so fassion him sylfe agayne troubles and stormy seasons of aduersyte/that he doth no whit complayne/ nother crye/ne blaspheme god and his worde: Lyke as do the mad and blindewise men of this worlde.

Thus doth sayncte Paule here meane in this place/when he so sodenly after the cõmendacion and prayse of chastite returneth vnto mariage sayeng/but to avoyde fornicasti on/lett every man have hys wife/and lett every woman haue hyr husbãde. What doth he entende in that he sayeth/ but to avoyde fornicacion? No thinge verily elles/but whereas suche maner quietnes ys not/ that a man can willingly lyve chaste/ that then he shulde wayte after no thinge more surely to folowe or to come/then fornicacion and lecherye. Wherfore yf the gyfte of chastite do lacke/yt ys better to be with out the pleasure and profytes of chastyte/and to gyve hym selfe vnto the miseryes/troubles/and paynes of matrimony/for avoydinge of synne. For yt ys alwayes more profitable to have payne greefe/and yrkesumnes/wrath out synne/ then to have synne with out payne/greve and yrkes

ſumnes. Yee thē to haue ſynne ioyntly to ge-
ther with thes thre.

Take heade here vn to the wordes of Pau-
le/whiche doth not hope that moche caſti-
te ſhulde be in the Corinthians. Chaſtite truſ-
ly. ys a right good thinge/ yf ſo luſte and
incontinency maketh not chaſtite ſo vul-
gare and commone a thinge for all parſo-
nis as we haue hetherto vſed to do/ and as
yet we do/ but all amiſſe. But he will that
vniuerſally all men be coniugate in matri-
mony. And yet not with ſtandinge he being
indued and inſpired with te ſpiete of good
did wythout dowte knowe more parfitely
the nature/diſpoſition/powre and inclina-
cion of man then all the Biſhopes that
hath bene ſith his time whiche hath ſtro-
yed fordone/and lett this godly inſtitucion
and ordinance. So that this ſaieng of ſain-
te Paule with them doth here no place.
But in this do they now raile and Bable in
pulpites. Yt ys lawfulle for ſome men to
haue wifes/ and for ſome yt ys not lawful-
le. Thus do they chaunge the latin worde.
Quiſq3 in to quidam/ that ys to ſaye euery
man in to ſome man. But as concerninge
this thinge you ſhall ſee more plenteouſly
here vnder. Saynt Paule now proceadeth
forthe.

Let the man gebe vnto the wife due benevolence / lykewise also the wyfe vnto the man. The wyfe hath not power over her awne body: but the husbande. And lyke wise the mā hath not power over his awne body / but the wyfe.

¶ Paule in this place doth instructe them that are coupled in matrimony how and in what maner they on both partyes shulde be ordred / ād demeane themselves in their state of wedlocke / which he doth here calle due benevolence. It is truly a thinge due / but not with standinge it ought to be willingly done and perfourmed. In that he sayeth it is due / he telleth the cause why God doth permitte vnto matrimony / and pardone that / which elles from without it / he doth punisshe and condemne.

For in this pointe is matrimony closed in the lawes of love / that nother the mā ne the wife hath power of their awne body / but the one ys bownde to serve ẏ other by ẏ lawe of love. Which thinge in fornication and advoutry hath no place / where as nother partye hath power apō ẏ other / nother ys ẏ one bownde ne oweth ony thinge vnto ẏ other but bothe of thē do seke their awne pleasures. Wherfore also soch vnclene & dishonesste love ys contrary vnto god. It is verily

a greate sayeng/that nother partye hath po wer ouer their awne body. So that yf at any tyme luste and concupiscence doth tēpte them the one ys then bownde to assente and folowe the desyer of the other/ād not to geve them sylves vnto eny other. In thys dothe manifestly appeare howe that advoutrye ys the greateste theste and robberye of all that ys in the worlde. For who so ever doth committe yt/geveth hys lively body/ where āpō he hath no power vnto an other: and taketh also a waye a lively bodye wher apon he lyke wyse hath no power.

Moze over Paules wordes be here manyfeste/and do not nede moche exposicion. Nother dare I now here serche ỳ pryvetyes of maryage/to wryte of thē eny vnhoneste or vnclene thynge. A ryght Christian shall here knowe by him sylfe/how yt shall become hym to ordre behaue hym sylfe measurably. Nother maketh it eny matter how so ever a wicked ⁊ vngodly body be enflamed⁊ rage Some olde men have vsed this Paganes bywordе. He that burneth overmoche in love/is made an adoutrer in his awne wyfe. But by cawse it is a paganes sayenge/ carnall and lecherous parsones careth not moche therfore. And I saye verely that it is contrary vn to the truthe/ for no man doth committe advoutry in his awne wyfe/ excepte he other refuse to have hyr/ or elles to

vse hir as his wife.

And I thinke that this matter cannot be better discussed ād entrated of/ then it is here of Paule/ whiche affirmeth that mariage is only savegarde and remedy againe lecherye. Wherfore that parsone which vseth it/ to avoyde and do awaye fornication I dare suerly saye that he hath Paule for his advocate and defender. Hereof may I tustly gather that it standeth not welk to gehter nother is it Christes learninge that the mā and the wife (lyke as we see vsed in some places) shulde abide separate ne come together after the example of Toby vntill the thirde night.

I do admitte that every man maye vse the same maner/ if so he plcase with the assent of his wife: but to thinke that he is bounde therto So that yf he do folowe it/ he doth a meritorius dede: or elles if he leave it vndone/ or do contrary wyse/ that ys to saye/ if he do vse his wyfe before that thyrde night/ he shulde therfore synne/ and do amisse. Then I saye this man in every dede thinketh evyll and doth amisse. Not bycause he dyd vse hys wyfe contrary to suche a folishe gyse as ys before shewed: but for that he hath a wronge enformed conscience. And finally soche thoughtes/ and opinions or ymaginacyons ar scrupulous and voyde of

ryght beleve / and coming of a conscience evyll encombred/or as Paule sayeth in the first pistle to Timothe.iiij. Marked with an hote yeron.

For yf the example of Thoby be of suche greate authoute and power / why shall not the example of Jacob the Patriarke be of more/whyche did touche/and knowe Lya his wife in ỳ firste nyght: This ought therfore to be fre / and in mannys lyberty. They dote and playe the foles/ that in these matters do laye snarys and make lawes or bondes. The wyfe hath power over the husbande / but over hyr awne body she hath none. And lyke wyse ys ỳt of the husbande. Here ought men therfore to stinte of ther statutes ꝙordinãces mãkige: for a better ordinãce thẽ this can none be brought/ỳ mẽ with out eny respecte of soche time shall vse ther wifes(lyke as god permitteth)accordige as they like and have necessite/ forthermore they have exempte certen dayes as those whiche we do calle vygilles ãd holy evyns / also women conceaved with childe.

I grawnte well that yt were moche profitable and necessary that in all thinges were none excesse / or eny thinge done immesurebly: Yet nevertelesse ought dew

not to be made eny vrgente lawe that shulde binde men of necessyte to refrayne. And theseworde of Paule ought to be lefte true which doth afferme that nother partye hath power over their awne bodye/other in this/or yet in eny other daye how so ever god sendeth it. And by this waye hath sainte Paule entẽded to oppresse & put downe fornicatiõ/and to put awaye all occasions of the same. O what a multitude of lawes doth this litle sayenge of Paule fordo and anulle/when he sayeth that nother party hath power over their awne bodyes? Yee I saye to you more over that it can not suffer nor abyde any lawe. For how shall eny man by eny lawe forbidde me from that body that is geven me both by the lawe/ād also by power divine? The graunte of god is more than the commaundementes or lawes of all men. That whiche he hath geven & graunted me/ought not sainte Peter pulle fro me/ād moche lesse oure holy father/which (I put it to youre iudgemẽt) how righteweslye he reioyseth ād clepeth him selfe Peters successor/ād vicar/and how directly he folowerth his steppes or learninge.

With drawe not your selves one from an other/excepte it be by cõsente for a time/for to geve your selves vnto fastinge and prayer/

and afterwarde come a gayne vnto the same thinge / leste Sathan tempte yow for your incontinency

That Paule had but lytell trust at all in the Corinthians / that they shulde lyve chaste the cause was this / he did knowe the devill / his snares / and sculkewatche / and also the weakenesse or fraile of the flesshe. Here yousse that maryed folkes are so mightely knitt and conjugate to gether that one ought not to absente or wythdrawe thē selves frō the other with out they both consente. No not for cause of fastinge nor of prayer. So ꝑ he had rather prayer and fastinge to be lette passe and vndone / then one of them shulde absente their bodyes from the other. Prayer vndowtedly is an hygh and a precyous dede. Neverthelesse it muste of dutye geve place vnto this / which (as it doth seame) is so vile a dede. And al this doth cause ꝑ lawe of love in whiche they be coupled and joyned: fastinge and prayer owght to be here vnderstande of fastinge and prayer that are taken ordrely and distinctely after dutye requyred in maryage / as when the husbande and the wyfe after they have ben conversante the one with the other and have had to do to gether accordinge after the course of nature / then do ordeyne with agreable consente to geve them selves. iij. iiij. vj. or xiij. dayes vnto prayer and abstinence. Like as also as

very parsone maye for himselve take apō thē suche fastinge for to chastyse ẏ body Ellys they that ar maryed/as well as other christian people be boundeby the tenor of the Euangely vnto fastinge & to prayer/for Christe spake indifferently vnto all people. That they shulde praye continually without cessinge. This fastinge is mesurabyll vsage of meates ād drinkes. And prayer is a criyng sigh/desyer/and morninge.

That in our englisshe texte we do here rede/withdrawe not yowe selves one from an other/it sowndeth rather after the Greke and laten examples/if it shulde be translate worde for worde: defraude you not or deceave you not one an other. Neverthelesse our englisshe texte doth right well and expressely shewe the sense and meaninge of this place/lyke as it doth excellently well of all other poyntes. For a man or a woman that is maryed for avoyding of fornicacyon hath no power over their awne bodyes. But the wife hath power over the body of hyr husbāde/and like wise hath the man the same power over his wife. So that yf the one shulde withdrawe them selves from the other/deniyng them their bodyes to vse accordinge to naturall vsage/permitted vnto mariage/it is vndouted that they shulde so defraude them/and do them wronge.

Also this naturall vsage of my body is

before called due benevolence that Paule a lited before biddeth every man to geve vnto his wife. Yf I therfore shulde wythdrawe me or denie it, I shulde wythdrawe that is my dutye to geve. And that were no thinge elles but fraude ād deceate. So that you have here clerely shewed before youre eyes that suche wythdrawing is very fraude / and no thinge elles. This have I shewed you / that you shulde not lacke eny knowledge other of this place or yet of eny other / yͭ I by the grace of god can helpe you vnto. And moreover to blanke and confownde oure pharisees & enmies of the trueth. Whiche yf they ones heare that I do interprete this plāce other wyse then it standeth writtē in the englisshe translacyon of the testamente / shulde paravēture beginne to rayle / sklaunder / and speake evyll (as it is not vnlyke but they will / for suche both is and ever hath bene their nature and demeaner) of me / and of the good mā which did it translate sayinge. Loe they contrary themselves on an other / how mad therfore ar ye to believe them? Therfore lesse yͭ you shulde be troubled by suche deceavable reasons and argumētes I have shewed you by reasons manyfeste / & authorite sufficient that we do not vary / ne contrary one an other. But that he vsing this worde wythdrawe / doth both well interprete or transslate / and by so translatynge also notably

and playnly doth expounde what is naturally ſignified by the greke and laten examples which if they were tranſlate in to engliſſhe/ worde for worde ſhulde be as I have tolde you before thus moche to ſaye: defraude you not on an other. And this fraude is whē a mā withdraweth hī frō his wife/ or the wife from hir huſbande.

What the cauſes of this fraude or withdrawing might be/ can I not ſhewe you ſo welle/ as they that have had experience. Nevertheleſſe I can lightly believe that there be diverſe cauſes/ as is fitting for that ſtate/ which is ordeyned for the time of trouble ād adverſite/ and not only for time of pleaſure/ and proſperite. In this ſtate doth ofte times aryſe anger/ variance and debate. And other whil̄s doth here in raigne choſen or angelicalle holineſſe (as ſainte Paule calleth it) & devocion. But Paule doth here ſhewe only one cauſe/ why ỹ one partie maye withdrawe them from the other for a ſeaſone. And other more like as I ought not to put/ ſo alſo ought none other man.

The cauſe which ſainte Paule ſheweth/ is that two maryed perſones maye conſente to abide ſeveralle a fewe dayes the one from the other to tame and chaſtiſe their fleſſhe by ſpeciall or ſingular ceremonies as faſtinge and fervente prayer/ ſpecially if ſo at eny time neade doth require/ for ſtronge and

mighty prayer requireth stronge and mighty abstinence or fastynge. Not withstandinge Paule leaveth this free and putteth it vnto mannes wille and liberte. Nother doth he therof ordeyne or make eny lawe/but dimitteth it vnto the consente of the both. Wherfor no man ought to enforse and compelle mē vnto this fastinge and prayer by lawes/as they have afore time hether to bene wont to do/he doth nowe take for hī. iij states of chastite. The state of widowes/the state of wedded persones/and the state of maydes or virgines. And so consequently doth shewe/what is necessary in them/to be knowen sayenge.

This I saye of favour/not of cōmaundemēte/for I wolde that all mē were as I my silfe am. But every man hath his proper gifte of god/one after this maner/an other after that.

¶ Before he speaketh after the maner of a cōmaundemente sayenge/for to advoyde fornicacyon lett every mā have his wife. &c. And let a man geve vnto the wife due benevolence. Howe therfor doth he in this place saye that he speaketh thes thinges not of commaundemente/but of favour? With out doute he willeth mariage to be a free thinge so that no man shulde be compelled to binde

himselfe there vnto/lyke as they dyd in the tyme of the olde testamēte. Wherfore he cō-
mawndeth no man to be maried/but graun-
teth yt/vnto every man that lusteth to be ma-
ried. But when they be onys coupled in ma-
riage/he geveth commawndemēte that they
do thē geve the one vnto ỹ other due benevo-
lēce. Moreover where as ys not the gyfte of
grace that thou mayste frely geve the vnto
matrimony/or not gyve the/that ys to saye
when thou canste not leve purely vnmaryed
and that both in mynde and body / then ys
matrimony vnto the cōmawnded/yee and
more then commawnded.

But what meaneth he in that he sayeth I
wolde that all mē were as I my selfe am.
Ys not thys spoken agaynste matrimony/
as though he wolde have no body conuga-
te in the bōde of matrimony? He wysseth
verely ỹ the precyous gyfte of chastite were
geven vnto every body/that they might be
voyde of the troblesome and sory cares an-
goysshe & vexacīōs of maryage/and intēde
gladly with their free mynde / and all stu-
dy vnto god only and vnto hys worde:
whyche gyfte was gevē vnto hym. Ys there
any parsone that wolde not wysshe vnto eve-
ry man thys gyfte? For chaustyan chastite
wysseth vnto all mē all good thynges both
of this worlde presente/and good thynges
of the worlde to come And yt hath none as-

sygned or certē mete & bownde of well do-
yng ād of well wysshīge. All be yt the thī-
ge whiche yt wyssheth do seme vnpossyble.
Wherfore in ỹ.ix.chapyter of the pystle vn-
to the Romanes he wissheth to be cursyd
from Christe for hys bretherne. But every
man(sayeth he) hath hys proper gyfte of
god/one after thys maner / an other after
that. Here he knowledgeth that hys wysshe
and desyer can not be fulfylled/ād that god
wylle not geve vnto every man thys gyfte.
And thys texte wolde I that thou shul-
deste put & laye vp for store in the inner par-
tyes of thyne harte. Yt comprehendeth many
thinges/and commendeth matrimony no
lesse then chastyte. For yf a man compare
maryage with chastyte. Chastyte veryly ys a
more excellente gifte. Neverthelesse matri-
mony(as in this passage sheweth saynte
Paule(ys the gyfte of god lyke as ys chasti-
te. The man also ys more excellēte then the
woman/neverthelesse she ys the worke and
creature of god/as well as he ys. Before
god all thinges be lyke and equalle/whiche
notwith standyngyf they be cōpared to ge-
ther the one with the other/they be differen-
te and vnlyke. What so ever thinge god dyd
make/ỹ same doth calle him their maker lor
de & creator. Nother doth one thīge calle &
name hym so more excellētly then an other/
be yt lytle thinge/or ellys greate. Evē so ar ly-
ke in value before hī matrimony & virginite/

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for eyther other of them/ys the gifte ād crea
ture of god/all though the on excelleth ād
surmounteth the other/yf so a man doth la-
ye them to gether and conferre thē betwyx-
te them selves.

By this doth clearly appere howe abho-
minably they do sinne/whiche make nonnes
swelle in pryde/when they babble that ther
holy religyon is more precious before god
than matrimony/and they faine that every
Nonne shall have a croune/or a garlende of
golde and precious stones/and soch like o-
ther I can not telle what prerogatives and
dignites do they dreame that nonnes shall
have above other parsones. Thorow whiche
lyes do they make suche folke proude/arro-
gante/wicked and vnfaythfulle/and to put
mor truste in their dedes and ceremonies/
then they put faith in Christe and in goddes
grace/so dispisyng matrimony as a thinge
many miles before the sight of god more ba
se/and lesse in valewe then chastite. And
they do calle thē selves the faithfull spōses
of oure savioure Jesu Christ/ye they be the
sponses of Satan/In that they do vse cha-
stite not vnto the entente/vnto the whiche
only yt was ordenid/that is to witte/not
that a man shulde be the mor excellent or bet-
ter before god: but that it maketh thē ẏ mo-
re redy & more apte to the study & love of the
worde of god/& learninge ther of thē doth

matrimonie.

For asmoche therfore as both of them is the gifte of god. And matrimony is as a cõmone gifte geven vnto many. But chastite is a singular and an vnwonte gifte graunted vnto very fewe. Yt is here in shewed that every mãought to examine him silfe/whether he fyndeth whith in him/ this cõmone and vulgare or elles this selde and singulare gifte. But bicause saynte Paule doth here manifestly conclude that chastite is a gifte of god/yt shall be necessary for vs to knowledge that it ys not our power. And therfore cã no man nother promise ner vowe it/ ne kepe it. For I cã not promise the goodes and giftes of god/onles he before hath geven them vnto me: or elles I be certen of his promesse/that he wylle geve them vnto me/ lyke as Hieremy was certen and assured. Therfore we rede none exãple at all/of eny vowe in the scripture/excepte in these thiges whiche were geven vs afore or elles sone after shulde be geven/as it is shewed Numeri. xxx. of howses/lãdes/money/carefe/abstinence/and other chastisinges or disciplines of our bodyes.

Therfore seyng ỹ we be enduynge this place/wher Paule doth so largely prayse & cõmende matrimony/and calleth it the gifte of god/we wylle entreate of it the more amply and tary the longer in yt/ entendinge to

declare yow howe that matrimony ys of all other the moste hyghest relygion and moste spretuall estate / And more over to prove vnto yow suerly and clerely that the sectes of all them / whom men vse to calle relygious / and of all manner shavelynges are falsely called spretuall ordres. But matrimony ys (as they saye) a seculare and an vnholy estate. How be yt that sayeng or callynge ought to be chaunged and turned So that matrimony ought to be called (lyke as in very dede it ys) a ryght spretuall estate / And other ordres shulde (even as veryly they ar) be called wordly and seculare estates They have brought vp nothynge elles in the worlde then perverse abusyons of names and wordes / wherwyth they have anoynted mennes mouthes / and begyled all the worlde: in suche wyse that yt / whyche ys secular shall be called spretuall / & a spretuall thynge muste be called secular.

Fyrste yow shall knowe that yt were profytable and nedefull that nothynge were called after the name of the spirite / excepte onely the inner lyfe of fayth / whiche ys in the harte / whereas the spirite hath rule and dominyon. Nevertheless for bycause that thynge ys also called spretuall / whiche ys outwardly wrought / & done by ỹ spirite of fayth

in ỹ mẽbres of ỹ body/we shall here not on
ly see/but also (as a mã wolde saye) manifest
ly feale with our hãdes/ỹ matrimony ought
moste rightwisly of all other be called a spi
tuall estate. And ỹ other ordres shulde be
call'ed secular worldly laye (as they vse to sa-
ye) ãd vnholy estates. I speake of these ordres
and religious parsones/which have suffered
thẽselves to be called ãd magnifyed by thys
name spirituall vntylle thys daye. But they
whyche walke in the ryght waye by fayth ãd
ar truly spirituall/these have the very state of
contynencye. Moreover thys can no mã de-
nye that the workes/dedes/goodes/ & pos-
sessions of them whiche ar call'ed spirituall
be lyke wyse exteryor/ temporalle/transito-
ry and corporalle/as be the workes/ & other
thynges of the maryed persones. For they be
done in lyke wyse by the body and membres
or instrumẽtes of the same/as be the thyn-
ges aforsayde whyche belonge vnto them
that ar maryed. For what so ever thynge ys
done by the body/and lymmes/or instrumẽ-
tes of yt/muste nedes be corporalle and exte-
riour/yee ãd the counsellles or thoughtes of ỹ
harte ought by reasõ of these soche outwar-
de & corporalle dedes both be in very dede
& also be call'ed corporalle. But yf yt be cõ-
venyẽt ỹ eny state shuld be call'ed spirituall
some other gretter thinge ys there vnto requi
syte/thẽ soche exteriour dedes & ceremonies

That is to wit faith in harte whiche doth come of the spirite / and maketh all thinge that is in man / as welle with out as with in spiritualle.

Consyder also now our holy religions / whiche before time vntill now have ben famous and magnifyed / and thou shalt finde / firste that they be in the beste wise stored ād prouided for / as cōcerninge thinges necessary vnto their levinge Beside forth they ar assured of their rentes / and revenues of meate / drinke / clothes / beddinge / houses / ād of all other thinges / and that moste plentevously / goten vnto their handes by other mēnes swete & labore / ye brought home vnto them / and put afore their nose. So that they nother be / ne wylle be in eny doute or perille / as concerninge for these thinges. No parsone is thus spiritualle ne mindeth for to be / except he knowe before that he shulde have abūdantly / of all these thinges / and all his lyfe lōge. O lorde god what an vnnumerable multitude / and thronge is ther in cloysters / and also amonges prystes that seke and appete this / that is to saye to lyve welthyly easely / without labor in ydelnes (and as they calle it) to live like a gentilman / ye to live fylbelyes and bely bestes / farcinge their hyde and stuffinge their paunches.

What other thinge elles is this / then to seke that state / wherin is no labore / and not

to have nede to lifte ones their yes vp in to heven/to loke after their daily bredde/ne to cruste in god that he shulde norisshe ād seade them? I wille telle yow at one worde/ faith in these estates and condicions of men hath no place ne space/ne tyme/ ne worke/ ne vse or exercise. For they be drowned in plēte and abundance of possessions and worldely goodes. Nother ys there eny confidēce of thinges whiche ar hoped for/ but a certen holding faste and assurance of thinges presente.

But if thou shalte mary a wife/ and be coniugate in matrimony. The fyrste tentation (wher with thou are incontinente assayled) ys how thow shalte nowe maintene thy wife and bringe vp thy childre? this assaute of tentation endureth all thy life longe. So that mariage of the awne nature is soche a thinge/ that doth both teache and also driveth the to have respecte/ and loke vnto the grace of god/ and in manner enforseth the vnto faith. And thus in matrimony we do see/that if fayth be wantinge that it is an harde paynfulle/and a miserable state/fulle of care angwisshe and labore. And cōtrary wise how moche the lesse faith the noble estates spretualle (as they vse to calle them) hath/the more ioyfulle ād blessed dayes do they leade or live. For they have royally provided for their belly/ & have no

nede to loke vnto the hande of god nor abyde his goodnesse.

Shewe me therfore whether of these states ought of right to be called spretuall. Thinke you not that this in which men have nede of faith/and in whiche faith knoweth hir workes/& hath hir dayly exercise & hath cause to truste in god/accordinge to the sentence of ỹ. ciij. psalme/where is sayde in this wise The eyes of all do truste in ỹ lorde/ād thou doest geve them meate in time convenient. Thou openesterby hande ād fyllest every lyvinge creature with thy blessinge.

Therfore only matrimony hath these causes/occasions/& exercises to truste vnto god Nother can oure spretuall estates be knowē by eny of thē / for they be so stablissihed founded/& fensed/ ỹ they cā vtterly fele none of these occasions. And thus have they driven out fayth/& stopped vp all holes/or creues/ ỹ it maye in no wise come in vnto thē. Is it not therfore a wicked presumpciō to bolde thē selves to be spretuall /& to avaunce their states to be in likewise spretuall / in whiche not with standing of their awne nature cā verely not be ỹ leste droppe of faith. So that the spret add suche spretuall states hath no more agremente / then Chriſte and Beliall/the daye and the nyght/the spret ād the flesshe /faith and our senses or reason/ for where faith is not /ne place nor occasyon

of the same/there can the sprete not be/ but all muste nedes be carnalle/ worldely and corporalle/lyke as by experience is manifestly shewed in oure religious folke. Agaynewarde they defame matrimony as a worldely secular and carnalle thinge. And they do not marke/that it was so ordened of god that it shulde as who wolde saye in maner bringe one halfe by compulsion/ and violence vnto the sprete and faith. So that comonly there muste nedes be a pure sprete/ where as is a good/and prosperous maryage. For that whiche is the worke or creature of god is so ordeyned /that it muste procede in faith and exercise or inuringe the same. which is in sufferãce of troble & adversitees But that which is founde/or made by man hath alwaye prosperous fortune and succession by cause yt is wyth out faith. For suche appeteth alwaye to be certen & in assurance of thinges there vnto belonginge.

Firste doest thou thus here in see ẏ matrimony is of soche nature/and properte ẏ it in maner strameth /enforseth/ & driveth one vnto the inwarde and moste spretuall worke/ that is to wit faith/for no worke is hygher/ more inwarde/ãd more spretualle then faith. It resteth and hangeth apon the pure and bare worde of God/and is delwered quyte from all thinge/that is not the levinge worde of Christ Jesu. But ther can be no thynge

higher or more inner nother in heven / ne in erth then the worde of God / whiche is verely even God him silfe.

Contrary wise these spretuall estates of their awne nature be soche that they allure a man vnto welthe and pleasures / and cause him to spende him silfe all to gether aboute the getinge of temporalle and exterior thinges / ẏ as partaininge for his body he maye lacke nothinge. And thus he refuseth plainly to be spretuall / excepte he might have abundance of outwarde thinges / and be of them assured / lesse he shulde at eny time misture / and have nede of faith or truste in god. So that thou muste plainly confesse that this spretuall estate of the awne kinde / and nature doth belonge vnto erthly / seculare / and worldely thinges / and that it ought to be reckened amonges them. Yee ād that therto it is verely an heten thinge / if it be conferred wyth matrimony. And againe warde that matrimony is verely an hevenly spretuall / and godly estate compared vnto this whiche men ar wonte to calle spretuall.

But I speake precysely that matrimony is soche a thinge of his awne kinde ꝛ nature / for many persones do not vse it right ꝛ accordingly in faith / ād for bicause of vnbilefe they do turne that / whiche is good to be vnto them selves evill. Contrary wise it is not

impossible that a man thorow the benefite and goodnesse of faith maye rightly/ & well vse an estate that is called spirituall. And by their faith to chaunge that whiche is evill to be vnto them good. But yet for this better or worse vsage can not matrimony be called evill/ nor the spirituall estate be called good/ for faith maketh all thinges good yee evē verydeth & all misse happes. But vnbelefe or vngodlines causeth all thinges to be evyll yee both the lyfe and also god him self. Of the vsage and mysusage of estates do I now nothinge speake/ but of naturall kinde and proparte that are in estates./ concludinge and affirminge, That matrimony is as golde. But the spirituall estates as dounge: by cause that the firste promoteth / & bringeth one to faith/ & the other vnto vnbelefe or wickednesse/ furthermore matrimony doth not only governe the herte/ or inwarde partes of man before god by faith / but also the body outwardly by dedes. So that it requireth both faith and also workes/ making provisiō both for ỹ body & for ỹ soule orderinge thē both well and vertuously/ matrimony (I saye) is of soche an inclinacyō/ that of the owne nature it requireth labore and [illegible] and to be maintened by hande warke / and is there vnto properly ledde or inclined by the worde of God/ written in the ii. chapter of Genesis / in this forme. In the creacion of

thy vysage shalte thou eate thy brede. That they which in it ar coupled muste nedes put them selves in perilles and daungers / and abide lokinge whether their labour come wel to passe or no. They muste also many times take hurte and losse/suffering many thinges in their wife childre and householde or familye. But who is he that can reckene vp all the paines/laboures and sweate of their face? So that truly as the body in wedlocke is occupied and exercised with labore/care/study/paynes/travayle and misery: In lyke wise muste the harte be occupied and exercysed with faith / knoweng alwayes that these thinges be godly cominge of God/ād are to him ioyfulle & pleasante. But our spretualty (which they so calle) is more sleuthfulle / then Asses of Archadye and do not live by their awne laboure/nor do eny whitte exercyse their body/sufferinge other mennys laboure to be turned in to their profite fedinge & pamperinge their gutte of other mennys sweate and laboure / not willinge to take ony losse or disprofite in their awne goodes. So that here doth appere no sweate of their face. But it fareth by them /accordinge as yt ys wrytten in the Psalme. lxxij. They be not in the laboure of men/ād shall not be scurged or suffer payne wyth men. And therfore ar they cloyed wyth pryde/ and overwhelmed with iniquite and wickednesse &c. And all though they be ofte in

their prayers and syngynge / doyng their spretuall workes (so verely wyll they have them called) yet do no suche workes helpe or profite vnto the exercyse of the body. And all be it these thynges all were done so well as is possible: yet were it vncerten whether they shulde be plesante vnto God / or no. But contrary wyse for somoche as they have not the worde of God to confirme the / god can not be pleased in them.

Thou wilte here obiecte againste me: No parsone shall then by this sentence abyde single or chaste: but every man shall contracte matrimony whyche thynge shulde be contrary vnto this texte of Paule. I wolde that all men were / as I my silfe am: To this I make answere / that I dyd now speake of the spretuall estates compared vnto matrimony / and not of syngle lyvinge or chastite. A spretuall (as they calle yt) estate is profitable vnto no thinge at all: but very nawght and moste damnable. And yt were better that no body shulde be so spretuall / but every man to be maryed. Moreover syngle and chaste lyvynge be an other maner thynge then a spretuall estate. Of spretuall estates doth Paule here speake no thinge at all: But he speaketh of true chastite / for no estate (I reporte me vnto yow) ys more vnchaste ne more prone vnto wantonnes lecherye / or fornyca-

cyon/then is this whiche we calle ecclesi-
astike or spretualle / as experience doth now
a dayes over moche shewe. But if so be that
some of them do lyve chaste / yet not wyth
standinge they do not vse chastite accordi-
ge vnto the ordinaũce ãd rule of Paule. So
that it can not be that chastite/wherof sain-
te Paule doth here make mencyon /for they
of chastite do make avaunsemente of merite/
excellencye/and dignite or worthynesse be-
fore god and man. But saint Paule maketh
it an easinesse/& quietnesse/wherby one may
the morceasely /lightly and quietly / serve in
the worde of God/gevinge more hede or at-
tendance vnto ẏ same. So that finally in le-
arninge therof he maye growe/and be more
stedfaste in faithe.

I saye vnto the vnmaried men ãd wyddowes / it is good for thẽ yf they do abyde/even as I do.

¶ Of this maye you well gather/that Pau
le was ones maryed and had a wife / for in
this passage when he sayeth: I saye vnto the
vnmaried and widdowes /he speaketh only
of widdowhode/differringe to treate of vir-
gines vntylle a litle here vnder/where as he
entreateth only and distinctly both of them/
and of their estate/like as here he doth spe-
ake only of widdowers widdowes & of their
estate/amonges whõ he reckeneth him silfe.

But in the treatise of virginite he maketh of him silfe no mencyon / ne counteth hym silfe amonge thē. How be it many do wene that ge did continue a virgen / according ge as is writtē in the. ix. chapter of his first epistle vnto the Corinthiās. Have not we (sayth Paule) power to leade aboute a sister to wife as wele as other apostles / and as the brethern of the lorde and Cephas? Other only I and Barnabas have not power this to do? But this doth not prove that Paule did alwaye lyve single / but moche more doth it rather shewe that he had a wife / yet for all that wolde not he leade hir aboute with him as the other apostles did leade aboute their wyfes. So that by this texte only / he shewed plainly vnto our understandinge / that he now was as an other widdower with out a wife / and yet nevertheless he had power laufully to take one.

Moreover it is ryght credible that he had a wife. For the Jewes (amōges whō Paule did lyve / & was brought vp frō his birth) dyd abhorre and recounte no thinge worse thē chastite or single lyving / with out a speciall privilege or exemprcon And yet as it is testified Philippens. ii. he did continue lyving amōge them with out any faute / that man coude countrolle him for or fynde in him.

For this purpose doth that also welle serve

whiche ys writen in the .iiij. to the Philip-
pyans/where he sayeth/Ye and I beseche ẏ
faythfulle yoocke fellowe helpe the women/
whiche laboure with me in the gospelle.
This yoocke felowe hath many vnderstan-
de to be Paules wyfe/and that not with out
iuste causes. Seyng that he maketh no men-
cion of hyr name/And also no man ell. sys
wonte so to speake/ callynge a woman his
naturalle and faithfulle maried mate or
fellow/that in greke ys called syzyge gnesie
which ys to saye naturalle/or very wyfe ẏ
beareth the same yoocke/ & hath made with
hym a specyall covenaunte or cōtracte abo-
ve other/lyke as they do ẏ ar knytte in ma-
trimony/onles she were his lawfull wiffe
ād spouse/ād here vnto hyr he committeth &
betaketh the cure to helpe other womē. Ac-
cordinge therfore vnto this figure or maner
of speakinge muste we saye. Other that Pau-
les wyfe was decessed? Or elles that by cō
sente of them bothe he dyd leve and departe
from hyr for a season / lesse he shulde leade
hyr aboute with him(as is shewed.j. Corin.
ix) & that in matrimony he dyd so lyve cha-
ste. But howe so ever this was/whether his
wife was dedde/or elles by hyr minde and
wylle she lefte him for a seasone for ẏ gospel-
les sake/yet is this vndoutedly true/ẏ he dyd
live like a wyddower / whiche a fore tyme
had bene maryed. But vnto what conclusi
on this mater shall now bringe vs/ I bese-

che yow lett vs diligently see.

Some be so farforth brought/that they ar enforced to knowledge. That prystes and bisshoppes maye be sacred in matrimony/ & they whiche are maried maye be pristes ād lefully use the office of them/ Bycause by testimony of scripture they see that for ẏ most parte all the apostles and all the bysshopes whiche were their successores were maryed But then they seke howe they shall save/ ād defende themselves/ saying: We reade that before they were chosē aparte and segregate vnto the office of Apostles/ bisshoppes/ & pristes/ that they were maried But yf any of thē were their vnto called aforc they were maried. Of thē do we not reade that afterwarde they dyd mary/ And therfore is it not lefulle for prystes now a dayes to mary Vnto suche disputers shall this place gyve sufficient knowledge.

Fyrste. Seyng that yow do confesse and graunte that maryed folke be made bishoppes and prystes/ and that they so not only be but also may be: Because the example of the apostles doth so both teache and requyre. What maner men then are yow/ that wyll now a dayes no maried body admitte vnto the office of a pryste? Yow do not only debar from prystehode thē that wylle marie/ & there vnto be disposed/ but thē also whiche all redy have wifes and be maried. Whiche

thynge notwithstādyng doth clerely repug-
ne agayneſt Chriſte ād his Apoſtles / And
moreover agaynſte ſaynte Paule: all be yt he
hī ſylfe had lyved ſyngle & vnmaryed. For he
ſayeth that he ought to be choſen for to be a
byſſhoppe / that ys the huſbande of one wy-
fe / & that hath hys chyldre buxum & obedict.
I beſeche yow / telle me, whome ſhall we be-
leve to have more wyſdome and holynesſſe /
yowr or elles Chryſte? Chryſte dyd choſe vn-
to hym prieſtes and apoſtiles that were ma-
ryed / and them doth he afterwarde alſo cō-
ferme by the teachinge of hys apoſtles. But
ſo che do yow refuſe and diſprove. Wherfo-
re other Chryſte muſte be both a fole ād vn-
ryghteares. Or you youre ſelves muſte be
Antychriſtes and deceavers. Furthermore o
welbeloved yffe you had lefte thys parte vn-
to vs free. That accordynge vnto the exam-
ple of the Apoſtles / maryed men myght ha-
ve ben made prieſtes / and had not beſyde-
forth ordeyned or decreed / That it ys not le-
fulle for prieſtes to marye. Men ſhulde not ſo
moche have ſtryvē in the matter ne ſo grette
peryll ſhulde therof have folowed. For then
ſhulde many ȳ be coupled in maryage ha-
ve taken and receaved prieſthode / and a gre-
te ſorte ſhulde have fyrſte tryed and knowen
matrimony. So that there ſhulde not have
bene ſo many whoremōgers ād lecherours.
But nowe you make thys pretenſe and cō-

loure: That yow dyd never rede/ that pry-
stes dyd marye wyfes/and also do remove
and put awaye vniuersally all maryage frō
prystes. Contrary vnto god/vnto nature/vn-
to reason/and vnto ryght/only of presump-
tion with out all maner of cause. So that
yow do fylle and replenisshe all the worlde
with whordome/ & fornicacyon. Why ther-
fore have not yow duly nother redde ne cō-
sydered thys texte aforerchersed/ taken out
of the. ix. chapyter of ẏ fyrste pystle vnto the
Corynthyans? Ys not in yt playnly noted ād
shewed. That a pryste may laufully be take
hym sylfe vnto matrimony? For be yt in case
that Paule was then other a vyrgē or elles a
wyddower. Yet notwythstandyng he sayeth
that yt was laufull and ryght for him to lea-
de a boute a wyfe. But saye vnto me I bese-
che yow/was not Paule then an Apostle/a
bysshoppe/and a pryste? I am suer that yow
can not shewe/ ne saye the cōtrary. Why thē
ys he so bolde to saye that he hath power/ &
authoryte to marye. Yf thē the hyghestē sta-
te/that ys to witt of Apostles do permitte/
and suffer a maryed man so stylle to abyde/
or elles afterwarde (yf so he hath no wyfe be-
fore) to mary and take one. Why do not also
the lower degre or estate of prystes permit-
te/and alowe the same?

Moreover seyng that saynte Paule doth li-
ve a widdower/and yet wyll not be forfēded

from power to marye a wife/ne have yt ta-
ken a waye from hym/he is verely after the
popes lawe digamus. All be it he recketh
not therfore: And to be digamus by the Po-
pes lawe is a thinge so hydeous and dete-
stable /that all though a man so beyng
were with out a wife/ yet shulde he not be
admitted for to be a pryste. Finally diga-
mus betokeneth hi/that hath had two wi-
fes. Suche in the olde testamente were those
called/that had two wyfes at ones/or to ge-
ther. But the canon lawe/whiche is made
by the pope/and his clyentes hath transla-
te this worde in to an other significacyon.
And hath made thre maner of digamus.
The fyrste ys yf a man by processe of tyme be
twise maried/all be yt other eche of the wo
men/whom he did mary were maydens or
vergyns. Secondly yf a man doth mary but
ones/yf so be whome he maried were a wid
dowe. Thyrdely yf a man do mary one/that
hath ben defloured in stedde of a mayde.

And these be all of the pope called diga-
mi/Nother may any man after the deth of
suche wifes be promoted (as they are wonte
to calle yt) vnto the ordres of pryshode.
But yf one had corrupte/ād defyled an hū-
dreth other mennys wifes/and had depry-
ved an hundreth maydes of their vergini-
te/ and besyde that shulde also kepe with
him or mayntene an hundreth harlottes

er concubines/ he moughte yet in the beste wise both be made / and ther to welle abyde or contynue a paste. Soche an holy thynge is their pristehode. There is no synne/ ne no myschefe in all the worlde so greate ne so diverse and manifolde that can let a mā from pasthode/ excepte only divine ād godly matrimony. Whiche not withstandynge they both do calle and confesse to be a sacramēte/ and worke/ or creature of god. And thus maye not that only/ whiche is the worke or creature of god stande with their pristehode.

Therfore shewe me now / yf so thou cāste/ how soche abhominable presumpcyon of makynge soche wicked tradicyōs and lawes can agree with the doctrine or learninge of Paule: Whiche is a widdower / and yet by lawfulle authorzyte and power wylle mary a wyfe. And not only beynge so contente / he geveth therto power by this texte (whiche we do now itreate of) vnto all both widdowers & widdewes/ to do the same no man excepte nother paste/ ne laye mā. what other answere may we here make/ then that soche folke by these vngracyous constitucyons (whiche so apertly ād shamefully do rage agaynste ỹ worde of god) wolde make vs in vnderstandinge lyke a stocke or a blocke? And make vs beleve that whordome/ adoutry / and fornicacion were better then

wedlocke or matrimony? O gracyous lorde onles thy mercy were so greate/as scripture therof doth make reporte/that is to saye/ infinite/& vnmesurable/how coulde ste thou that art so mighty righteous/& pure of iudgement abyde or suffer this/&d suche other like wicked presumpsyon and boldenes/soche stinking whoredome/and vnclennes? What other thinge is here sought/thē that the creature/ordināce/&d worke of god shulde be discommended and reproved. And ẏ vnto whordome shulde be made an opē cāpe/free passage/ and space to over runne all the worlde? Like as now a dayes(a lacke for pyte)we do see with oure yes And as Samel did prophecy of the kingdome of Antichriste Ye shall not be touched with regarde or care of women/as who shulde saye:the regarde of whores shall only in it bere rometh.

For asmoche therfore as they be compelled to knowledge that the apostles even after their apostlesshippe did abyde styll and continue in matrimony I wolde faine knowe why that pystes do not mary? Or elles wherfore they maye not mary? Is maryage suche a devillysshe thinge/if so ẏt be begonne after pristehode/ and so godly if it go before the same? Muste it suffer suche alteracyon for goyng before/ and cominge after? Verely all reason muste knowledge/&d every man(as is sayde comonly)muste nedes fele

at hys fyngers endes'/ ẏ what so ever thinge may be godly with pryste hode and after it / ẏ very same maye be well begũne in pristehode/and before it. Moreover this maye right well be called a shamefull iuggkynge and a sore deceavable colour/that matrimony shulde be called ãd preached to be a godly thinge (as in very dede it is) and graunted of them to be an holy sacramente / and yet may not be admitted that a godly thinge & sacramente shulde have place with our prystes O miserable ãd blynde blyndenes/that men not only can not be made beleve that suche thinges be very tryfles/and delusyons but also ẏ they be broughte in mynde to iudge that maner of lyvynge to be of all other moste excellente and beste /howe myght ever this thinge have come to passe/onles ẏ wrathe of god had thus punisshed the worlde/ and plaged it with blindenesse?

Let vs therfore abyde here by Paule /whiche in no wise shall deceave vs. He doth ordeyne that widdowers maye lefully marye wifes whether they be prystes/or nor besyde forthe that all maner widdowers or vnmaryed men may mary wifes. So that it shulde nother hurte ne hynder vnto pristehode yf one maryed a widdowe. Nor any whit helpe and further / yf he marye a mayde /and vyrgen. For there ought to be no suche respecte of parsons concerninge this purpose.

But all soche thinges amonges christē mē ought to be free/and in their electyon to take whether they luste/other mayde/or widdowe to be their laufulle wifes / with out any domage or preiudice in any thinge /ād this thinge (that is to witte ẏ pristes have authorite to mary wifes/like as have all other mē ād ẏ with out any respecte of parsones/whether they be maydēs or elles widdowes) doth sainte Paule sufficiently cōfirme/ꝛ approve in this/ẏ he writeth this pistle not vnto laye men only (as they are wonte to calle thē) but vnto ẏ bisshopes also/ꝛ prestes ꝛ generally vnto the all christē mē of Corinthe. And bycause he doth separate none estate/ne parsone: yt shall not be lefulle for vs to applye and appointe his worde vnto laye mē only/nor yet vnto any other certen estate or parsone.

Sainte Paule truly did knowe fulle well both by the doctrine /ꝛ also by ẏ ordinaūce of Christe/ẏ nother ẏ worke of god might be letted/or forbiddē/ne his creature fordone ꝛ destroyed. Now is mā verely the creature /ꝛ worke of god/made or create to begette childre/ād to multiplye his seade / as appereth Gene.j. For asmoche therfore as god which is alway cōstante/like minded/ꝛ with out any alteracyō made man at the beginnīge in this wise/ād so wolde him cōtinually for to be. Thinke you surely ẏ it pleaseth hī not now nother for love of pristehode/no nor for love

of his euāgely (which is of all other thinges moste pꝛecyous) to make of a mā a stocke or a stone. Nother to lette the worke or operacyō of mānes nature whiche of god ar naturally in thē implanted. But what other thinge is it to saye/ when a pꝛiste is forbiddē to mary/ then that a mā shulde not be a mā And yᵗ the creature or worke of god shulde cesse/ bycause of humayne pꝛesumpcyon ād lawes. Only God whiche did thus create man/ maye these thinges in him altere and chaunge thorow his giftes and grace. But free wille with all his powers & enforsemētes be here verynothinge ne can any thinge do. Therfor sayeth Paule.

I saye vnto the vnmaryed mē/ ād widdowes: It is good for thē yf they abyde even as I do: But and yf they can not abstayne / let them mary. For it is better to maryе/ then to burne.

¶ It is good verely to abide as Paule did/ but in continente he addeth wherfore it is not good ād yᵗ it is better to cōtracte matrismony/ then to abyde in widdowhode or vnmaryed. And Paule doth here shewe forth all at ones all the causes of matrimony/ and setteth abounde to mesure or enclose all the glory of castite / when he sayeth: But and yf they can not abstayne / lette

them marye. This is as moche to saye. Necessite compelleth the to mary againe. How excellently so ever therfore chastyte be prayesed/and how noble so ever the gifte therof be/ yet necessite causeth that very fewe do there vnto attaine/for they can not abstaine and abyde chaste/for all be it ỳ we are christen/havinge the sprete of god by faith: yet is not the worke and creature of god in vs stroyed and taken awaye from vs/that thou muste cesse to be a woman/and I a mā. Nother doth the sprete bereve from the body his inclinacyon and naturalle workes/but that it may eate/drinke/slepe/disgeste/and disgestyon avoyde/like as the body of an other man.

In lyke wise doth not the sprete take awaye from man ne frome woman ther shappes/ their lymmes/or membres/their seade/ ne their frute and operacyon/for a christen mānes body muste aswelle norisshe seade/ begette childre/and multiplye/ as the body of other men of byrdes and of all bestes/and lyvely thinges. Vnto the whiche purpose it also was create. As ys shewed Genesis .i. So that man of necessite muste appete naturallỹ a woman/and the woman a mā/onles god wonderfullỹ by a singular & excellent gyfte do holde them therfro and delyver them. And thus meaneth Paule here in this place/when he sayeth: But yf he cānot

abstaine/let him mary. As though he shulde saye. Vnto whom god hath not geuen a singular grace / but leaueth in his body the nature and disposicion of the same: It is good for him / ye it is necessary that he do mary / forsakinge both verginite and also wyddowhede / furthermore it is not the mynde of god to make a principalle and singular gifte comon vnto many / but wolde that maryage shulde be comon to eche body: like as he dyd ones ordene and create yt / he wille not take awaye his creature from every man / ne lette the operacyon of the same.

Moreover a Christen man is sprete and flesshe. By reason of the sprete he neadeth not of matrimony. But bycause his flesshe hath communion & felishippe with the corrupte flesshe in Adam and Eve / & so is fulle of luste and concupiscence / for this diseasse and malady hath he truly neade of matrimony: and by his awne strenght / or power can he not be with out them / for his flesshe ragerth / burneth / & breadeth seade / as wele as doth the flesshe of eny other parsone. Where as by matrimony / as by a medicine there vnto moche necessary and behovable he doth not ease / helpe / quenche / and represse yt / for in the. iij. chapter of Genesi. he sheweth clercly before oure face / what thinge he wolde suffer in man / when he did not onely not take away the blessinge of multipli-

cacion / but rather dyd alowe and confer me yt. When notwithstādinge he dyd knowe full well / that suche blessynge coulde not be fulfylled and performed of nature (that was corrupte and fulle of concupiscence) whith out synne.

But that matrimony is comenly had in disdayneas a thinge that is cause of many myseries / paynes / trouble / and hevynes / and soyōge people are thereby persuaded to decline there fro vnto vnwylfull chastite: yt ys a reason vnprofitable ād of no value / but pervisshe ād moche synfulle. Nother have they so made good the cause of their chastite. For necessite doth alwaye prevēte and stoppe out this forechaste or provisiō. Which sayeth that yt nother is / ne yet cā so be. For no mā cā grounde or set him selfe faste in heven: Accordinge as here doth affirme sayncte Paule: he that can not abstayne (sayeth he) / lett him mary. Agayne warde that matrimony is hyghly commended as a thinge that is hevynly and godly & moste fulle of all goodnes. This is lyke wysse a reasone of smalle effecte / ād prevayleth not. For there is no mā or elles very fewe that wolde be moved with these good thinges that come of yt / to geve their selves there vnto. Nature alwaye abhorreth labore & sweate / inseparable cōpaniōs of honeste mariage.

There be also very many other causes of ma

ryage. Some do mary for love of mony ād worldly goodes. A greate sorte doth falle there to for curiosyte to satisfye their appetite and pleasure that they have to attempte all thinges. Some do be take thē there vnto for to gette thē hyres. Sainte Paule sheweth only on cause/and that is necessite. It is therfore called necessite/ for nature muste nedes have an yssue/ and go forthe/ that it maye encrease and be multiplyed. But thys wille not god admitte with out matrimony Therfore hath every man neade to go there vnto/necessite so requiringe ād constreyninge him to do/yf so he wilke here before God passe his lyve with a good conscience. And were it not that this necessyte did thus bynder/wreste/ and dryve me/I wote not truly what matrimony the other causes shulde make & stablisshe. Namely curiosite/whiche at ỳ firste moveth these soles with lightenese to begine soche an erneste sobre godly ād necessary estate/wherin doth sone come vnto them the thinge/whiche they sought.

But what meaneth he by this ỳ he sayeth it is better te mary thē to burne: Every mā no faile that with out mariage & a speciall grace at tēpteth to lyve single or chaste knoweth right well what this sayeng is & what it doth meane. Nother doth he here touche eny secrete or prevy thinges: but he speketh of ỳ comō & manifeste experiēce & felige ỳ al mē hath/ which with out matrimony or

ſingular grace do labore to lyve chaſte or vn-
maryed/for he dorh attribute burninge vn-
to all parſones/that with out the hygh and
ſingular gifte of chaſtite do lyve vnmaryed
and chaſte. Nother doth he teache any re-
medy therfore excepte only the copulacyon
of matrimony. All beyt they vſe to calle ſo-
che burninge prevy trouble and affliction.
Whiche proverbe ſhulde not have bene ſo
vulgare or comone/yf ſo it had ben a very
ſecrete or prevy evill. Nother is it ony doute
but theſe alſo vnto whom is geven the gifte
of chaſtite/ do ſome time feale luſte or prick-
kinge/& be there with tempted: but by cauſe
yt paſſeth/and ſhortely periſſheth/ therfor
ys not ſoche a thinge in them called a bur-
ninge/Generally burninge ys a fervore he-
ate/tikillinge/prickinge/and ytchenge of the
fleſſhe/whiche reſteth not/ne blinneth of boi
linge or ragynge / and ys a daily inclinacion
or diſpociſion other to a woman or to a man
whiche ys in every body/where ys not deſi-
er and love vnto chaſtite. So that ther be
founde ſo veri fewe that lacketh this boilin-
ge and burninge in the fleſſhe/as there be fe
we that hath this ſoveraine gifte of chaſtite
geven them of god. But wyth this burnin-
ge ar ſome pained hardly/ ſome more ſofte-
ly or eaſely / Some be ſo ſore tormented/
that they are faine to poure out and ſhede
their nature/Whiche all do belonge vn to

matrimony. In so moche that I dare be bolde to saye/ Where as ye nowre one chaste/ there ought more then an hondred thousande to live maried.

Thou canste here in have no better counceile geven the/ then that thou shuldeste folowe and laye before the/ the example of saint Hierome/ whiche extollinge chastite with moste high/ but moste perilous laudes ād comendacion: Nevertheless she he confesseth that he coulde not tame his flesh notherby any fastinge/ ne yet praiers. So that chastite was vn to him more than any man can saie harde and painfulle. O how moche blessed time did he lose in fleshely thoughtes He was of that opinion that he thought chastite might be goten by oure power and strength/ & indged yt to be comone vn to all mē. Beholde this holy man being thus infired with heate & burnīge of ỹ flesshe/ ought to have maryed a wife. Here now seist thou what a thinge it is to burne. He was in ỹ. nombre of them that belonged vnto matrimony/ and he did injury vnto him silfe/ whiche attempted many thinges/ that he shulde not be maryed. Many of thes examples shalt thou fynde in a boke called de Vitis Patrum.

Therfor this is the conclusion of sainte Paule. Where as is not this surmountinge/ principalle/ rare/ ād singular gifte of

god / there of neceſſite muſte be other burninge / or elles matrimony: Now is it moche better to be ioyned in maryage / then to burne. Bycauſe that burninge all though non evill dede ſhulde therof enſue / yet not withſtandinge it is fruſtrate & vaine chaſtite / for ſo moche as it is not kepte with delite & love / but with greate yrkeſomnes / weryneſſe / grudginly / by enforſemēt / & vnwillingly. So that before god it is eſtemed evē as incontinencye and vnchaſtite Where ye herte is vncleane / whē the body by violēce ſo cā not be. What availeth it therfore thoughe thou kepteſte by greate painfullē & vnpleſante laboure paine & vncleane clēnes: Yt were moche better for the / yf thou were clerely maryed / & ſo to be voide or with out this ioye or pleaſure as they take it for to be and wene that it is / but all amiſſe / for all be / it that in matrimony alſo is both affliction / paine / trouble & angwiſſhe / yet not withſtādinge maye a man geve him vnto all theſe / and ſometyme have pleaſure and quietneſſe But where as lacketh a ſoveraine grace with out matrimony / yt can not be that thou maiſte geve thy minde vnto chaſtite / & lyve therin merely or in quietneſſe.

Conſider alſo now I beſeche the / how madde teachers and rulers they be / which ſōpeſſe youth every where in all cloyſters

vnto chastite / teachinge ỹ chastite the more harde & painfulle it is for them / & the more that it standeth againe there minde / ỹ more excellente and better it is for them.

Alle be it ỹ with other thinges thou maiste thus playe and daly / here notwithstandinge thou muste do other wise with chastite / for it can not be wylfulle / where as ỹs not redy p̄sente a singulare grace. Any other thinge may be wilfulle thorow faith. These mā ner of men do after the fassyon of the Jewes / whiche offeringe there childre vnto Moloch dyd burne them in the fyer. So that me seameth that Paule for this cause dyd vse thys worde burnynge / that he wolde touche and signifye this abhominacyon. For what is it elles to close and shute vp a yonge p̄sone alle hys hye longe with suche a burninge other in cloysires / or yet elles where / then to offer or consecrate them vnto the devylle for honor / that he shalle be constrayned so to kepe miserable and damnable chastite?

I am here compelled for cause of suche teachers and rulers to shewe yow of a thinge / whyche I hearde onces tolde of an honeste and a sadde man / to thentente that suche rude and blynde hedes / yf so they wylle / maye seale eyē with their hande how p̄wisyly they governe and rule One of their

faculte whiche was a preacher did at a time declare and telle in an open audience/ that a man whiche wolde please god/muste begynne to chastise himsilfe suerly. And for an example he brought forth out of the boke called de Vitis patrum one Simeon whiche did stande an whole yere apon an high pyller on his one fote continuallly praying without interrupcion/ vntille that wormes did brede in his fote/whiche all when they felle downe were chaunged in to precious stones Like wise(saide he)muste thou also punisshe and chastise thy silfe/ yf so thou luste to serve god. Soche manner of folisshe trifles & toies becometh well soche a folisshe preacher. Whiche with out doute Satan did then ymagine for to moke and begile Christen people/ To thentente that he myght fordo and destroye the miracles of holy men/ whiche in ỹ time were wrought. As though they all did saver of soche pevisshe mockage and triflinge.

Beside forthe this mocker or triseler toke also for his purpose a yonge childe that went to grammer scole(for so yes yt comonly sene that as men are wonte to saie/ one foole maketh ten other) whiche after a singulare wise studing to serve god kepte in his vine that he might so paine and punisshe him silf. In the fourte daie by cause he had made no water/ he began to falle sicke/ And whan he coul

de of no body be perſuaded to piſſe and make water/ he minded ſo to die/ on tylle god by inſpiracion did put in the minde of a certen perſone/ that he ſhulde praiſe him in his entente or interpriſe and comforte him as one that hadde done weſſ and vertuouſly. (For as ſaieth Solomon ſo muſte men ſpeake with fooles in their matters) How beit quod he men ſaie that thou doeſt yt for a vaine glory/ But yf ye doe ſo / then ye yt nothinge worthe. When he had ones hearde this/ he forſoke & gave over his purpoſe ſayeng/ Seyng they do thus ſaye and interprete the matter in thys wyſe / I wille rather do any thinge/ thē perſorme that/ whiche I have begunne. This ys truly a rude & groſſe foly/ But yet ought we not to ſet lyght their by / or vtterly deſpyſe yt. For in yt hath god ſhewed as I ſayde before what learninge ſoche preachers and rulers do teache. Therfore wyll I entreate of yt in thys place somewhat the more largely. Yt fareth veryly thus (lyke as the ſcripture and experience do ſhewe) that this lyfe / whyche man leadeth here in the erthe ys miſerable/ wretched/ and wofulle. What ſo ever eſtate thou ſhalt choeſe/ or take the vnto/ ye though yt ſeame never ſo bleſſyd and godly. And yet ys ther none ſo wretched or wofulle/ but yf a mā by precepte ſhulde be compelled to kepe in his vrine or his diſgeſtiō/ he wolde doute

lesse rather choese to do any other thinge/ then to take vpon hym to do any soche im possibilite. But bycause no body ys cõpelled vnto this I meane to kepe in his mine or disgestiõ. No man verely doth consyder and esteme how profitable and precious a thinge yt is to avoyde them from hym. And yet in the meane season they marke and bewayle the misery of their estates/ whiche not withstandinge is ten tymes lesse / then the woe and misery afore sayde/ yf so they shulde be compared to gether.

In lyke condicion standeth yt with this burninge. For they that are knitte in maryage be at libertye. They maye quenche that whiche burneth them/ nother take they thought or care for that payne and misery (lyke as a woman whiche after that she is delyuered/ thinketh moche other wise then when she was in travelinge). Nother do they afterwarde note or regarde any thinge saving the troble and sorynesse of their condicion. For lyke as a good thinge when yt is presente is not regarded/ evẽ so an evyll whe yt is paste is no more remembrede. But they whiche yet do abide in soche heate or burninge/ and do never hope from yt to be ridde & delevered/ what other thinge elles can they do/ then skorne and counte for fooles them/ that are wedded? And yet nevertheless they groone and complayne of this whiche doth so vexe them. They are thus compelled to ke

pe that/whiche ought not to be kepte/ & that also in vayne/ and to lose all their harde and paynfulle laboures. Whiche thinge of all other ys moste miserable & sorouffulle. How moche soner shulde they suffer and bere all the burdones and vexaciōs of mariage/ thē soche burninge? And to telle yow shortly. Sory mariage is better then sory chastite. And an harde or paynfulle mariage is better then harde or paynfulle chastite. The reason hereof ys not far to be sought/ for soche chastite perissheth & is of non effecte: but soche mariage doth profite helpe & is moche frutefulle. And this do I speake of ẏ burnīge of thē/ ẏ cōtinue chaste/ of which be very fewe. The greate multitude do not suffer this heate/ ne cōtinue chaste/ but laboure by all meanes to be delivered frō it. Of whiche thinge I wille now no thinge write. But so sone as they ẏ lyve vnmaried be here of ridde/ doth their cōsciēce tormēte & cōdēne thē/ whiche amōges all other paines is moste intollerable/ & wretchidfull. And thus doth ẏ matter in cōclusion come to passe: ẏ they whiche without a singular grace/ do lyve single & vnmaried/ for ẏ more parte be so pained & trobled ẏ evē with their body they falle vnto ribaudry & sinne of lechery. But the other fewe do lyve outwardly chaste/ and inwarde be rybaudes or lechers. So that ẏ firste are indaunger of dammacyon/ & the other muste nedes live a sory miserable & vnprofitable life

And where be nowe both ſeculare ād alſo eccleſiaſticalle rulers and officers / that ſhulde conſider in their hartes and loke apō thes tormentes of wofulle ād wretched ſoules: But they them ſelves by there dayly cōpulſion and requeſtes do promote and helpe forth the liynge ſpace of errour to multiplye dayly thes evilles.

¶ The ſeconde parte.

Unto the maryed commaunde not I / but the lorde. That the wife ſeparate not hyr ſilfe fro the mā If ſhe ſeparate hir ſilfe / let hir remaine vnmaryed / or be reconciled vnto hir huſbande agayne. And let not the huſbande put a waye his wife.

¶ Hetherto hath he ſpoken of widdowers and widdowes. In whom of both partyes the one may lefully be with out the other / ẏ man with out a womā / ād contrary wiſe / ye it is profitable that they ſo be / yf they cā lyve ſeveralle a lone. But this can not be permitted in maryed folkes / for the worde of god byndeth them to lyve in company to gether. But that they that ar vnmaryed and widdowes ſhulde continue vnwedded / it is nother commaunded of God / ne forbidden: but is a pure and holſome counceile of the

apostle. And it is graunted them frelye afo
te god other to mary agayne / or elles to a
byde in widdowhode.

The apostle permitteth divorsemente vn
to the man / and vnto the wyfe / but vpon
this condicyon / that they both afterwarde
do abyde sole and vnmaryed. In whiche
thinge he doth both disanulle ỳ lawe of Mo
ses / by the whiche a man might put a waye
his wife / whan he was wery of her / or dyd
hate her / and mary an other.

And when she was separate might ma
ry with an other / in the. xxiiij. chapyter of
Deuteronomy. Wherfore although Mo
ses gave soche a lawe vnto the Jewes which
were stubburne / frowarde / styffe minded / &
of hethē cōdicions / yet ys yt not lefulle so for
christē people to de And therfore doth Chri
ste also him silfe disanulle the same lawe in
the. xix. chapter of Mathew. For in the olde
testamente were lawes that did not only cō
cerne the spirete / but ỳ also regarded worlds
ly policye and civile orderinge of the comōs
In somoche as god did governe and gyde
that same people both spretuallỳ and also
bodyly. In like maner as many thinges be
ordened in the Emperores lawe / which not
withstandinge be not lefulle / for a christen
man to vse / soche as these are to withstande
or put awaye violence violently / to sue or kee
pe plee / and other like.

Lawes wherby malefactores are chastened ād let from there purpose be moche differente from those by whiche the good people be instructe and ruled. In lyke mānet was this lawe institute to punysshe evyll doers/ād to stoppe their purposes/lesse they haply shulde kylle their wifes / ād do that were elles worse. But Christen people muste be hartely good(so that soche lawe is not necessary for them)and kepe styll̄e their wifes/so longe as they shall lyve. But where right Christen folke are not / there at this houre is yet this lawe nedefull̄ to be vsed/ that shulde pardone and permitte vnto them for to departe fram their wyfes / after the gyse of paynemes /and to mary other / lesse by dissencyon in levinge to gether/they shulde twyse purchase helle /that is to wyt both in this lyfe presente / and in the other folowing. But yet ought soche parsones makig so divorse knowe / ỹ they in so lyvynge were no lenger christē people/but paynemys in a damnable estate.

The Apostle doth speake here of one cause of dyvorsemente/that ys to wytte anger. When the husbande and wyfe can not cōpany to gether and lyve in agremēte or vnite / but are letted and / pulled awaye bord from prayer and all other good dedes thorow meanes of hate and anger . This

doth the texte manifestly shewe/ when he sa-
yeth/ Lett them be recōcyled/ ād lett thē abyde to gether vnseparate. But yf they wylle not be reconcyled/ but wyll be separate/ lett them abyde vnmaryed. Where now reconcylynge ys commaundded/ there dowtelesse ys anger and debate shewed to be. But soche dyvorsement truly doth the Apostle dissemblinge or twinkelinge/ at mennes infirmite permitte/ when .ij. parsones can not to gether agree with in them selves. Elles truly one hadde neade to have borne an others burden/ and not to departe a sondre in any wyse. And this certes ys the cause why he denieth vnto them that are dyvorsed and separate/ after that to mary with eny other parsone/ to thentente that they shulde so have occasyon to be reconcyled againe the one vnto the other and come agayne to gether. Yee in ẏ he bindeth & cōpelleth thē to love a newe eche other and kepe company agayne: For asmoche as parhappes the gifte of chastite is not gyven them.

But what yf the one will not love againe/ or have atonement with the other/ and will algate be separate/ and the other partye not havynge power to abstayne or abyde chaste shulde be enforced to chose hym a wyfe for his mate/ what shall thys parsone do/ may not be lefully mary with an other wyfe? To that I make answere thus sayng

yes doutlesse may he / for seynge that he is not cõmaūded to abyde chaste / nother hath the gifte of chastite gyven him / and beside for the his mate vnto whom he was before maryed will not voyt save to be atone with him / and love him againe / but taketh awaye from him hir body / whiche he can not be with out. Thes thinges thus layde to gether and well estemed / you shall knowe that god will se not binde him to that thinge / whiche exceedeth his power / for the præsumpcyon or lewdenesse of the other partye. And he muste do in like wise as his maryed felfow were decessed. Specially seynge that he did not refuse to be reconciled and brought to atonement. Againe the whiche whether so ever partye do withstande / the same ought to abyde vnwedde / all be it the other do after mary againe. As here doth afferme Paule saiyng.

To the remnaunte speake I and not the lorde. If eny brother have a wife that beleveth not. If she be cõtente to dwelle with him / let him not put hyr awaye. And the womā which hath vnto hyr husbande and infidele / yf he consente to dwelle with hir let hir not put hym awaye.

¶ Whē sainte paule recordeth that this parte is not his saiyng/but ẏ saiyng of ẏ lorde/ he sheweth ẏ it is not cōmaūded of god to do other this or elles that / for he divideth his sayenge from the worde or sayeng of God. So that the sayinge of god is a precepte and cōmavndemente/but his/is a counceff. More over his entente is to saye thus. To the remnaunte/that is to wit / where raigneth no debate and brawlinge betwyxte maryed mates. As whē two ar coupled in matrimony. Of whiche the one is a christian / ⁊ the other havinge no knowlege of christe(like as it was comonly sene when fayth was at the firste tyme preached amonges the gentilles that one shulde turne him vnto Christe/and an other turne frō him) Aff be it that in this case a Christen parsone may departe from one that is not Christen. Yet neverthelesse the counceffe of the apostle is that soche shulde not departe. Inasmoche as his maryed mate whyche ys not Christen doth accepte hym and ys contente wyth hym And doth not let him to coūterfette and expresse Christe in maner of lyvinge/nother cōstrayneth hym to lyve wyckedly or to abiure Christe.

This doth Paule signifye in this worde yf she consente or be contente to dwelle with him ꝛc. That is to saye if an infidele or vnbelever be contente/ād will dwelle with him

that hath maryed her / and wille ſuffer hyr
to do all that pertayneth vnto a chriſten bo
dy / for matrimony is but a corporalle and an
outwarde thinge whiche doth nother hurte
ne helpe / nother doth hinder ne further fa
ith: And in whiche the one may be a chriſti
an / and the other an infidele. As well as o
ne that is ſworne vnto Chriſte maye eate / dri
ke / bye / ſelle / and occupye with a payneme / a
Jewe or a Turke in all maner exterior thi
ges. Like as coyn now a dayes one maye be
a perfecte and devoute Chriſtian and the o
ther a wicked and famed or falſe Chriſtyan.
So that matrimony for cauſe of byleve or
vnbyleve ought not to be broken ne fordone.

But yf an infidele wolde not ſuffer hys
maryed mate to abyde Chriſtian / or to lyve a
Chriſtian lyfe / but wolde perſecute and lett
her. There were it conveniente tyme yͭ a chri
ſten body ſhulde vſe the ſentence of Chriſte /
whiche ſaith in the .x. chapter of Mathew:
He that loveth his wife or childre more thē
me / is not worthy of me. Here beginneth di
vorſemēte. Yf ſo divorſemente be / other muſt
it reconcylynge / and attonemente be made /
or elles the parſone which refuſeth reconci
linge muſte abyde vnmaried and ſole. So yͭ
yet vnto the parſone which diſyreth to have
peace and atonemente ſhall not be denied au
thorite afterwarde to mary an other / as ys
ſpecifyed before / for Chriſte whiche ys the

ſpouſe of the ſoule muſte be greater / and bet
re more rome then the corporalle ſpouſe. Yf
therfore the one wille not ſuffer ỹ other to a
byde & lyve to gether with ỹ eternalle ſpou
ſe of the ſoule / Here may a Chriſten parſone
forſake hir firſte corporalle ſpouſe / and take
an other whiche will ſuffer Chriſte the eter
nalle ſpouſe abyde to gether with him.

So is it likewiſe cõueniẽt & neceſſary to be
vſed now in theſe dayes. Yf ỹ huſbande will
teache and enforſe his wife to do theſte / ad
voutry / or any other vngracyouſnes againſte
god. In theſe is ỹ ſame cauſe ād reaſone of
divorſemẽte / that is ſpoken of before. So ỹ
excepte they be reconciled and come to an
attonemente / ſhe maye leſully mary an other
huſbande. And in like caſe might alſo the
man do / yf ſo his wife dyd inſtance him to
evill / and wolde not elles be contente to vſe
him quietly for hir huſbande. Of this grouns
de and principle cometh / that advoutry ma
keth divorſe / and geveth power vnto ỹ other
parſone that lyveth truly accordinge to the
ordinaunce of wedlocke to be maryed a new
to an other / for it was cõmaũded in ỹ lawe /
Deuteronom. xiij. That every mã ſhulde accuſe
his wife / brother / and moſte aſſured frynde
(that moved him to ſynne agaynſte God) a
fore the iudge / that they myght be ſlayne.
But in the new teſtamente (where corporalle
deth and ſlaughter bereth no rome) it is ſuffi

cient to forsake them and departe awaye frō them. Of this is gathered. That those be wicked examples. In whiche we do fynde that certen maryed womē by consente of theyr husbandes (whiche had bene imprisoned) were defloured ād viciate/ to thentente that they I meane the husbandes thorow soche a vyle dede shulde be delyvered. The precepte and worde of god ought to have bene observed and kepte / all though the husbande or wife/ body ād goodes/ shulde have perisshed. Nother hath eny man authorite to geve hys wyfe leave to cōmytte advoutry.

¶ The Apostle procedeth forthe.

For the vnbelevinge husbande is sanctified by the wyfe: And the vnbelevinge wife is sanctified by the husbande. Or elles were your chyldre vnclene: but now ar they pure.

¶ This is spoken after the propertye of the hebrew speche/ and accordinge after Paules manner of speakinge. That vnto the pure are all thinges pure/ as he saieth Tit. i. And Roma. viii. All thinge worketh for ỹ beste to to christen people and to thē that love God So that this is his sentēce. A christiā maryed shall have no nede to make divorsemēs

te. For there is no thinge to let thē /but that they maye abide with infideles/that are associate to them in maryage/and also begette ād bringe vp vnbelevinge childre. The reasō why is/where his maryed fellow doth not compelle him to forsake and renounce christian lyvinge/fayth is so mighty a thinge that no hurte can be to it/ ne to the possessioners therof by lyvinge or company keping with infideles and vnbelevers. And it is all one vnto them whether the thinge be holy or vnholy/pure or elles vnpure / ẏ they do vse / for even very deth whiche is of all thinges moste hydeous and terrible is vnto them thorow faith an holy ꝛ a precyons thīge faith doth vse all thinges well and accordingly /whether they be good or elles evill/excepte only vnbileve ād the frutes therof / for they as strayte as a lyne be contrary vnto faith/and thruste it out of place. Elles what so ever doth not expelle faith ād put it out of place /is by reason of the same fayth harmelesse/pure/ clene/holy /profitable ād holsome: So that faith may company with them/vse them /and finally continue with them without any hurte or ieoperde / that maye vnto it thorow them befalle for onles it were thus: No parsone might ever lyve christiā/for he muste nedes abide ꝛ passe the course of his lyfe in ẏ middes of vnbelevīge evill ꝛ wicked people. But whē he foloweth

not their manners/but doth ryghtly vse the/ he may well lyue by them/and amõges thẽ/ that by his good behauore and diligẽce they finally maye be stryken with remorse & compunccio of minde & become godly & christiã

In this ys all the worlde vnto a true christian nothinge but holynesse/pureneſſe/profite/and goodneſſe. Contrary wyse/ All the whole worlde ys vnto an vnbeleuer or an infydele vnholyneſſe/vnclenneſſe/hurte & destructiõ/yee evẽ god hĩ silfe with all his vniuersalle goodneſſe. As Dauyd writeth in ỹ xviij. psalme sayng: Thou shalte with holy be holy/and thou with the good and innocente shalte be innocẽte and good. And with the chosen shalte thou be chosen/ and with the perverse and weywarde shalte thou be weywarde. And why? For holy folkes and saintes/that is to saye belevinge persones do holyly and blessydly vse all thinges. But the vnholy and vnbelevinge or infideles do dismerite or deserve the contrary/that ys to saye they misuse/make vnclene/and defyle themselves in all thinges vniuersally/and that alwaye. For they can vse no thinge well or holyly/that yt shall profite them vnto blysse. Thus be also infãtes holy & clene/all though they have not yet receaved baptisme/Not bicause they be in their awne persone clene and holy. Of whiche holinesse or clẽnesse ys here of Paule made no mencion: But bycause

they be clene ād holy to the. For thy holynes-
se and clēnesse may lyve to gether with the
and bringe them vp/with out defylinge thē
as though both soche childre and yow that
are their parentes were/holy or clene. For in
this wise entendeth here Paule to saye / yf
a chrystien body shulde happly have childre
with an infidele /whiche chylde were gro-
wen vnto yeres of discrecion (as in that tyme
was often sene) ād they wolde not assente
to be yet baptised ne become the servantes
of Chryste. Then for so moche as no persone
ought to be cōstrayned vnto fayth/but there
vnto to be drawen of god thorow preachinge
of the evāgely. Nother of ỳ fryndes shulde
therfore purpose in their minde to forsake
their childre/ne denye ād take from thē fat-
therly or motherly love and fyndenesse/whi-
che they also do owe vnto them/ as though
they dyd synne and defyle thē sylves by abyd-
inge with their vnbelevinge childre. But
bodyly they owe to be pursute with them/
overseyng/rulyng/ and nurtringe them as
well as they were moste holy christianes/for
they are not vnclene (sayth Paule) but holy ¶
pure. That is to saye/Thy fayth maye so be
well occupied ¶ exercised aboute thē/that yt
shall yet abyde both holy ¶ pure. Lyke wyse
shulde mē also do nowre a dayes/¶ at all ti-
mes Yf their childre wolde not receave ỳ evā-
gely/they ought not therfore to be refused ¶ ca-
ste awaie/but thou shulde take diligēte kepe ¶

make provision for them / as well as yf they were moste faythfulle or Christian. Their faith commended vnto god / so longe as in other pointes they were buxum / and behaved thē honestly in worldly and outwar/de thinges. For the outwarde dedes like as the parētes may evē so are they also bounde to let and inhibite with punisshmētes: But vnbeleve & inwarde evilles. Nother can ony parsone let / ne by chastysemente refraine excepte god onley. So that this texte of sainte Paule remayneth styllle a mighty and valyant defense for vs / teachinge that all thinges be holy and pure to thē that beleve / and have faith.

But ād yf the vnbelevinge departe / let him departe. A brother or a sister is not in subiection to soche. God hath called vs in peace.

¶ In this place Paule delyvereth ād setteth quyte a christian maryed parsone gevinge sentence for him / that when his maried mate being an infidele or an vnbelevīge body will departe or elles will not graunte ẏ he shall folowe Christe. Then doth he geve him libertye to mary againe with an other. And that Paule doth here speake of maryed mate / being an infidele or payneme / the same ought to be vnderstande also of fayned or false christian. That yf one maryed mate wolde

aforce the other to wickednesse and misbe-
yve/ne suffer him in lyvinge to folowe chri-
te: The the parsone thus evilke enforced shul-
de stande lose/and at libertye to mary with
whome he liked. Whiche thinge onles chris-
tes lawe did allowe to be lefulle. A christi-
an shulde be faine to folowe his maried cō-
panyon being an infidele or misbelever: Or
elles against his minde to abyde chaste vn-
to greate perille of his soule/his nature the-
re againste repininge/and all the powers of
the same.

But this doth Paule here denie sayenge.
That vnto soche is not a brother or a sister
in subiectiō/ne thraulde. as though he shul-
de saye: Vnto other parsones or in othere cau-
ses/ where as man and wife do abyde to ge-
ther with rendringe one an other due bene-
volence of matrimony and soche other thin-
ges lyke is the one bounde vnto the other/ a-
nother hath power of them selves. But whe-
re as the one wille straine the other vnto wic-
ked and vngodly lyvinge/ or elles they wille
departe a sondre/ In soche poyntes is not a
christen body bounde ne compelled to aby-
de with soche mates eny longer. If then he
standeth not bounde/ then is he ridde & dis-
patched. And if he be ridde and dispatched
he maye the lefully mary with an other. As
though the parsone whiche is coupled vnto
him in mariage were deceassed.

But what yf the ſecõde mariage dyd not hychaunce hym welle/ ſo that the one wolde compelle the other/ the huſbande his wife or contrary wyſe/ to lyve vngodly? ād after the faſſyon of paynemis/ vntylle that he ſhulde come vnto. iij. or. iiij. maryages/ ſhulde yt be lefulle then for a manne ſo ofte to marye a new wyfe as his olde were ſoche one as I have ſpoke of before: ſo ẏ he had ſtylle lyvinge ten wives or elles more that had lefte and forſaken hym? And agayne warde ſhalle yt be lefulle for a woman ſo to have ten or elles more huſbandes livinge/ which are departed and gone frome her? I make anſwere/ We maye not ſtoppe ſaynte Paules mouthe/ ne ſtryve againſte thē ẏ luſte to vſe ſo ofte as nede requyreth his teachynge. His wordes are manifeſte: That a brother or a ſyſter ys free from the bonde or lawe of mariage/ yf the other partye whiche with them ys maried wylle nedes departe/ or conſente no lenger to tary with thē And he doth not ſaye that this thinge maye be ones done: but he putteth vntoi oure libertye ẏ thīge/ other to departe or elles to abide ſo ofte as ſoche a thynge befalleth. For he wylle have no perſone put in ieoperde of inconvnencie or fornicacion/ that he ſhulde be therin intretayned and intrapped thorow an other bodyes/ preſumpcyō and lewdeneſſe: What is that? Ought not a Chriſte

body to tary for other ẏ cominge agayne of his maried fellowe/or elles hyr discessē/lyke as vnto this daye hath bene observed in comone vsage/ & also cōmaunded by ẏ Popes lawes? I answere/ vnto that/ yf sothe one please to tary/yt resteth in his good wille: for seyng ẏ ẏ apostle doth here sette him quite & at liberte/he hath no nede to abyde for his fyrste mate ony lenger: but he maye chaunge his estate & take an other/yf so he lyke/ & ẏ by ẏ authorite & power of god And wolde to god ẏ ẏ cominalte of christē people had vsed this teachinge of Paule/or elles ẏ they wolde yet cause yt to be brought in vsage/when so ever yt chaunseth ẏ ẏ mā or ẏ wife rūneth awaye/ & doth forsake the one an other: wherof doth afterwarde aryse excedige moche fornicaciō & synne This thige hath ẏ wrecchedde lawes of the pope moche holpē forth/ & promoted/whiche bindeth one maried persone vtterly to abyde other ẏ cominge againe/or elles ẏ decesse of ẏ other ẏ was his mate/ & now departed ād gone from him And ẏ vnder ẏ payne (o presūpcion/o shamelesse boldenes) of everlastinge dānacion/whiche (yf ẏ after he do mary) he shall rūne in to. And thus by meanes of these vngracious lawes hath ẏ pope kepte thraulde & put in subiectiō chrystē bretherne & systers for ẏ presumpcion & trespasse of other/ ẏ were/their maried cōpaniōs/ & with out all maner of causes hath caste thē in to

(ieoparde

of fornicacyon.

But what yf the partye that wente awaye alledgeth that afterwarde he will'e amende his lyfe/ shall they then be receaved ād taken in to cōpanye againe? I saye vnto that yf so the partye whiche did abyde and dyd/ not beginne fyrste to departe doth continue in the estate, that he was in before/ād hath not in the meane seasone maryed with an other/ he maye then receave his firste mate/ whiche he was ioyned vnto afore/ but dyd departe from him/ q not only he maye thus do/ but also he ought to be coūcelled so for to do/ that they maye love eche other againe and companie to gether/ lyke as they did at the firste. But if in the meane space he shall parhappes be maried vnto an other/ then ỹ partye whiche did forsake hyr maryed cōpanion muste vtterly with out excepcyon be put awaye/ ne ever after be receaved againe. And vnto this purpose serveth well that is writē of Moses Deuteronomij. xxiiij. If a man be maryed or take a wiffe/ to whō he casteth no fauoure be cause she hathe some deformite/ he shall write a libell of divorsement and geve it her in here awne handes/ and so shall let here departe from his house And when she is departed and hath maryed an other husbande/ yf he also hate here and will geve her a lybell of dyvorsamente/ and so demysse her from his house/ or els

dye: Yet may not her fyrst husbande receave her agayne for his wife lyke wyse ought also a man to do in this case / to the ende that suche runnynge a waye or departinge maye be reproved and condempned. For doutlesse yf yt were so done all soche dyvorse and departinge of maryed couples / shulde consequētly be abated / dymynisshed / and lefte.

But now when the Pope hath opened awaye for soche runners / ād defendeth their runninge and lewdenesse / gevynge them leave and authorite to come agayne and claime their fyrste maryed mate / what mervaile ys yt / yf the worlde be fulle of broken forlorne and desolate maryages / yee and replete wyth fornycacyon: Which Sathan hath sought and studyed to bringe a boute thorow these lawes. But yf both partyes be founde culpable in soche runnynge a waye or departinge: Then ytys right / that eche of them do forgyve other their offenses / and be reconcyled / and dwelle agayne to gether And this doctrine of Paule extendeth so farre / that yt comprehendeth all manner of dyvorsemente. As when the husbande and his wife departeth a sonder the one frō the other not only bycause of Christian faith / but also for what soever other cause / be yt other for anger or elles for any other displeasure. So that in all soche thynges the

cause of dyvorse ought other to reconcyle hym vnto his maryed mate / or elles abyde vnmaryed: and then the partye whiche is innocente and faultesse beyng dysmyssed and sette free / shall have power / yf so his mate wille not be pacifyed and come to agrement to chaunge his estate / and marry with an other. For this is vtterly a wycked / vngodly / and hethen maner that maried folkes shulde be separate / and goo awaye the one from the other / for cause of anger or elles of any other fylthy & vncleane thinge / and wylle not rather suffer and take parte to gether of good and evylle / of swete & of sower / lyke as they are bounde to do. Wherfore soche maried people be verely hethen & infideles.

God (sayth he) hath called vs in peace / that is to saye / that we shulde spende oure lyfe in reaste and peace. So that a Christyan husbande / or a Christian wife ought not to stryve for cause of faith or vnbylefe / nor yet departe / or go awaye: Yf that the vnbeleever wille not violently putte the awaye frō godlyneſſe. But every parsone ought to be suffered to abyde in their awne beleve. The cause therof referryd vnto God. For vnto sayth no man nother can / ne ought to enforce and straine an other. Only god muste drawe me ther vnto by his grace. And it is requisyte that we do teache / exhorte / & praye for the

same / but cõpelle any parsone we maye not
Wherfor a Christian & beleuinge body ought
to lyue peasably with his maryed compan-
on beynge an infidele / or of misbeleue as
touchinge the exteriour dedes of matrimony
and not to dystroble him nother with thre-
tenninges / departinge / ne persecucyon. For
God is not causer of stryfe / but of peace
As is testifyed Roma. xv. and also in ỹ. xiiij
chapter of this pistle. Therfore doth he not
teache stryfe and discorde / but kepeth & pre-
serveth vs all vnto peace. Now sainte Paus
le procedeth forthe.

**For howe knowest thou o wo-
man whether thou shalte save thy
husbãde or not? Other howe kno
weste thou o man whether thou
shalte save thy wyfe or not? But
even as god hath distributed vn-
to every man.**

¶ That is to saye / ye ought therfore to kepe
mutuall peace one with an other in matrimo
ny / ãd ỹ also with your wives or husbandes
beyng infideles (whẽ they withstãde not / ne
let you to bylieve and folowe christe) & not to
manace / thretne / drawe & enforse thẽ vnto fa-
ith. For it is not in your power / ne your dede
ỹ one may come or turne to ỹ faith of christe:
but yt cometh of god only. Seynge therfore
you do not knowe whether god will save thẽ

thorow meanes of yow / or elles not / yow
shall nourisshe peace betwyxte your selves/
nother shall the husbande at eny tyme com-
pell his wife beynge an infidele or misbele-
ver vnto the right fayth of christe / or elles
stryve with hyr for cause of the same: Nei-
a christian wife shall for it contende or braule
with hyr husbande beynge an infidele. But
yf it shall please god thorow yow to save the/
he there vnto shall helve and ayde yow dea-
linge his grace and gifres vnto to yow/ whi-
che are to soche an effecte belonginge. This
seameth vnto me the very minde and mea-
ninge of Paule in this place: That he wolde
have no parsone enforced other to ỹ faith or
godlines/but one maryed mate to lyve quie-
rly and in peace with an other / vntille the
tyme God shall chaunge and converte vnto
him by vs/whome he shall please. Whiche
thinge teacheth welle sainte Peter in the. ij.
chapter of his firste pistle.

Thus muste we do with a maryed mate
that is an infidele or misbelever/ his evyll li-
vynge of vs muste peaseably be sufferyd/ no-
ther ought we to constraine him vnto fayth
and godlynes/ but curteously bringe him the
re vnto with softe entreatinge and tranquil-
lite/ for peraventure thou art vnworthy that
any parsone thorow the shulde come vnto
goodnes / or waxe better: But yf thou be
worthy god of hys good wille shall graunte

gyve the to do it. In the maene season thou
art suer that thou mayste lefully lyve with a
maryed mate/yee and that though he be an
infidele so longe as thou doest not folowe
his vnbylefe or infidelyte/and evyll lyvinge/ne doest there vnto consente/and suffe-
reste not thy silfe to be compelled of him to
any vngodlines. But doest endure soche
wickednesse and iniury of thy maryed per-
tyner(even as we muste suffer them of all ỹ
worlde/and of Satan him silfe)entreatinge
him with mylde wordes and peaseable ly-
vinge/vntill that god shall lende him gra-
ce to repente him silfe and so be converted.

As the lorde hath called every parsone/so let him walke. And so ordeyne I in all congregacyons.

¶ This is the conclusion & summe of this
parte of matrimony. In which he entendeth
to saye thus: Faith and christianite is so free
a thinge that it is bounde to none estate/but
is preferred/ruleth/and reygneth in the all
and over them all. Wherfor a man needeth
to chose none estate for to come vnto blysse.
But in what so ever estate/and condicyon/
the evangly or fayth shall fynde the in/be
thou not adoubted but that thou maiste be
saved in the same. Therfore that thou shul-
deste forsake wedlocke and kepe separate thy
silfe from a maryed mate/for cause of faith

or ſalvacyon/it is not nedefulle.

And contrary wiſe that thou ſhuldeſte be coupled in matrimony other with a chriſtiã/ or elles with an infidele for cauſe of faith or ſalvacyon/is alſo not nedefulle. And to tell yow at ones in fewe wordes. Yf thou be wedded other with a chriſtiã/or elles with an infidele/thou art therfore nother ſaved ne condempned. Or yf thou be vnmaryed/ thou art lyke wiſe therfore nother ſaved ne condempned. For all theſe thinges are here free and indifferent. But when thou ſhalte be a Chriſtian/and ſo lyve/then ſhalte thou be ſaved/and yf thou be not a chriſtian/but an vnbelever or an infidele/thou ſhalte then be damned.

So do I ordeyne in all congregacyons/ that is to ſaye amonges all Chriſten perſones/where I do preache the Evangely. For I do not teache ỹ they ſhulde forſake their eſtates/and make troble or debate/but ỹ they ſhulde in them continue/and paſſe the courſe of their lyfe in peace. Marke here well/& thou maiſte now ſee that Paule doth leve here none eſtate bleſſed/excepte the eſtate only of chriſtianite or of a chriſten body. All other doth he make free. That of themſelves they nother make for ſalvacion ne ret for dãnacid: but all they thorow faith be holſome/and thorow vnbylefe hurteſulle or noyſome/ad that even when they be beſte kepe

ke. What cā now oure monkes/nōnes/ freres/ & suche other cloysterers here saye: whiche do magnifye/boste/ & coūte their estates as ẏ gretteste estates of salvaciō above this moste singulare estate of faith and Christianite? They be all vndouted vtterly damnable/excepte they be lefte free and in mennys eleccyon. So that folkes cōsciences vnto thē be not bounde/ & that they be observed / not to thentente that thorow thē mē shulde purchase blysse: but inconvenient age to invre or exercyse the body. As in tyme comynge yf so god please I shall shew more largely.

If any mā be called beyng circūcised/let him not take vncircumcision. If any be called beyng vncircumcised/let him not be circumcised. Circumcisiō is no thinge/vncirdumcisiō is no thinge: but the kepinge of the cōmaundemētes of god is all to gether.

¶ Here doth he gather to gether certen examples of his conclusion a foresayde/that is to witte ẏ every māne walke acordinge after his caffinge. The firste exāple is of a Jewe/ & of a Gētiffe. And this is ẏ meanīge therof If so thou be circūcided & art vnder ẏ lawe/ thou shuldeste not deme that to be trespasse & sinne/so that thou therfore woldeste go frō

yt / for fayth doth as well except circumcision as it doth all other lawes. So that thou maiste lawfully be other circumcided / or elles uncircumcided. Nother doest thou nede other of them unto salvacyon / but eche of thē is lyke wyse free for the to lyve in. And to mary or elles to lyve unmaryed nother is necessaryly unto the requisyte: but both estates are unto the free / and in thy choyse to take wheth er of thē thou lykeste. In lyke maner yf thou art a Gentyle uncircumcided / and with out the lawe of Moses / thou shuldeste not thynke / that it is wronge and unlawfull for the so to abyde style / or elles that thou oughteste to be circumcyded: but it is free for the to lyve as thou doest concerninge these estates / and soche other / and to use whether of them both shall please the Only faith maketh the ryghteows / whiche also only doth fulfylle the lawes of god.

These .ij. sayinges let not a man take uncircumcision / and let him not be circumcised / ought not to be so understande as though Paule dyd forbydde both circumcysion and uncircumcision. For who can observe or kepe both to gether. He shulde then do contraryate to be circumcysed / and also uncircumcised. And he him silfe doth here saye ỹ circumcision is no thinge. Which sentēce shulde be contrary unto this that he sayeth / let him not chose to be uncircumcided / for yf he

ought not to take vncircucision or be vncir
cuncided/he ought then to be circuncided.
How may then circuncision be no thinge?
And by this meanes/this saiyng vncircun-
cision is no thinge shulde repugne with that
he sayeth. Let him not be circuncided /for yf
he ought not to be circuncided/he muste thē
chose vncircuncision/how therfore shall vn-
circuncision be no thinge? But yow muste
vnderstande that he doth not here inhibite/
and forfende the estate of circuncision or el-
les of vncircuncision whiche be corporalle
and exterior thinges: but he forbideth in thē
necessyte/cōpulsiō/ & cōsciēce making/ & wil-
leth thē to be free & idifferēte/ & nother good
ne badde/lefulle ne vnlefulle in them selves:
but that they be according after they ar vsed
and lyke as the parsones which have thē &
do lyve in them. So then shulde not a man
chose to be vncircuncided as though of ne-
cessite he muste not lyve circuncised. Nother
cōtrary wise so to take circuncision/as thou-
gh by necessite he were so bounde to do No-
ther of these is worthy of blisse And yet both
of them may be suffered with out any charge
and grefe of conscience. So that to be bor-
ne a Jewe or elles a Gentille that is to saye
circūcided or elles vncircūcided doth nother
helpe a man to god ne lette him from God.
But this cometh only of fayth and vnby-
leve.

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Accordinge vnto this ought also be sayed vnto owr people. To be wedded is nothinge/and to be vnwedded ys nothinge/ To be maried with an infidele or mis belever is no thīge/Also to be maried with a christiā is no thīge. He ẏ is maried/let hī abyde maried/he ẏ ys vnmaried let hī not desyer mariage. That is to saye/let hym not suffre his consciēce to be greved/as thowgh he ought other to lyve maried/or elles that he ought to abyde vnmaried. Moreover to be a monke or a frere ys no thinge/ Also to be a laye man ys nothynge: To be a pryste ys nothinge. And to be a monke ys lyke wyse nothīge. He therfore that ys a laye mā let hym not be a mōke/And he that is a mōke let hym not be a laye man: That is to saye let him not thinke that he hath necessite to be the one/or elles the other or make ony stickinge or grudge in conscience by cause he ys this or that: but let him abyde the mā/ that he ys/and in the same estate. So that yet hys fayth do remayne pure & sure. For where as fayth cā not persever there necessite bīdeth as well a monke to departe as an other man/whiche is called awaye and withdrawen from Chryste by his wicked maried fellow.

But here may the Jewes make obiection and laye agaynste Paule. Sayest thou that circumcision is nothinge worthe/ but that

the commaundemente of god is all to ge-
ther. Circumcysion ys straytly commaunded
vnto vs of god: how then doest thou saye ẏ
yt ys no thinge? This ys a longer matter/
then ẏ I cā nowe (accordyng as yt is wor-
thy) speake of. but I have of yt sufficient-
ly wrytten in other places. Notwithstandin-
ge have ye yet now agayne my minde in fe-
we wordes. All the lawes of Moses were
wrytte̅ ād geve̅ vntylle the comige of chris-
te/ he at hys comynge ought both to tea-
che and also to geve or deale vnto his
servantes fayth and love. Where as
they be/ all the commaundementes and la-
wes are fulfylled abrogate and made free.
So that after the cominge of Chryste no cō-
maundemente ys any lenger necessary/ on-
les yt concerne fayth and love. Therfore
where love shall requyre/ I shall suffer to be
circūcyded/ elles I shall let yt passe. Where
charite shall requyre anger/ there am I bou-
de to be angry/ elles I shall forbere and ex-
chue yt. Where charyte shall demaunde
to sweare/ there muste one sweare/ elles shall
I abstayne from swearynge. And so muste
be done in all preceptes/ lawes/ and com-
maundementes/ both goddes and mannes.
What charyte ys/ and howe that yt seketh
the profyte & pleasure of oure neyghbore ād
also what fayth ys/ hath ben many tymes
shewed in other places.

Let every man abyde in the same state wherin he was calledArt thou called beyng a servante? Care not for yt. Nevertheles yf thou mayste be free/vse yt rather.

¶ He doth here repete agayne his conclussyon/ puttyng an other example concernynge the same of a servante and a free man. In that tyme many were as one wolde saye not their awne men/lyke as nowe a dayes in certen places be some that hath no power over their awne body/and are comonly called bōde men or slaves/Thes Paule doth here calle servantes: Therfore as in matrimony the one partie ought to vse them sylfes vnto the other / wher as also ys power taken a waye from them over their awne body / evyn so ought also thrawldes and bonde men vse them to warde their lorde or master/ in whose power they are as concerninge their bodyes/and are as yt is vsually sayde their lordes very good and possession. But yet he that is called in this state sayeth the Apostle let thym not care for yt: That ys to saye / Yt hyndereth hym not from godlinesse/ne letteth in him Christian fayth. Nother he therfore neade to runne from his lorde or master: but ys bounde to dwelle stille with him/whether he be a Christiā or elles an infidele/godly or elles vngodly/onles he

wylle drawe him a waye from Christe ād cō-
pelle him to folow nawghty livinge. For thē
is yt not vnlefulle for him to departe ād py-
ke him a waie to thētēt he maye the better li-
ve and worke that shall be for his salvacion
And all that ys spoken a lityll before of a
Christian or faythfulle persone/how that he
shulde here hym in wedlocke to warde his
mate beyng a misbelever or an infydele / the
same ought to be repetyd/and suyde agayne
here in this place/for the behavore of a chri-
stian servante to warde his lorde beyng an
infidele. And what soever he doth speake he
re of him/that hath no power over hys aw-
ne body: The same ought also to be vnder-
stande of all prentyses/ iournymen/hande-
maydes/women servātes/hyerd men/attor-
nayes/labourers/and generally of all ser-
vantes /touchinge the accomplisshemente of
their masters commayndemente. Ye and
of all promyses/covenantes/bargenys/ād
of all manner wayes/by whiche any persone
maye in any wise be boūde vnto an other For
in these all/and soche other muste they per-
forme their office/service/dutye / and pro-
mise/whether the other partye be Chrystian
or hethen good or evyll/ godly or elles vn-
godly/so lōge as they go not aboute to pul-
le vs from the faith of Christe/ne spoile vs
of Christian livinge. For al soche states are
free/ne ony whitte wyth standing christia-

nite. As yf the kynge of Pole or Hungary had made a leage with the Turke/they were vndouted bounde to performe yt/ and saye as Paule doth here teache: god hath called vs in peace.

Nevertheleſſe yf thou mayeſt be free (sayth Paule) vſe yt rather

Not ſo that thou ſhalte pyke the from thy maſter or lorde prively/ and runne awaye. But that thou ſhuldeſte not vnderſtande the sayeng of Paule/ in whiche he byddeth that every perſone do abyde in the ſame ſtate/ wherin he is called/ as though thou myghteſt not have power over thyne awne body/ yf ſo thy maſter or lorde dyd wittyngly and willyngly make the free and gyve the manumiſſion. Saynte Paule wille here inſtructe thy conſcience/ that thou mayſte knowe how both eſtates are free/ whether thou be a ſervãte/ and thraulde in body vnto an other perſone/ or elles a free man and vnthraulde. And thys purpoſeth he/ to thentẽte he ſhulde not ſtoppe the from libertye and fredome/ yf ſo thou mayſte come ther by with ſavor of thy lorde and maſter. So that yt ſhulde be all one/ as touchinge vnto thy cõſcience/ whether thou be a ſervante or thraulde/ or elles at libertye and free. Yf god and

hys honor do so suffer and allowe yt. For Chrystiã fayth doth not invade and violētly take awaye other mennys goodes / but cau;eth vs to performe all covenantes and dutyes/ye rather then fayle to do all that we can or maye/even for them that we be not bounde ne beholdyng vnto (excepte by the lawe of love) and to them that have no power over vs.

For he that ys called in the lorde beyng a servãte ys the lordes fre mã. Lykewyse he that ys called beyng free / ys Chrystes servante.

¶ Thys ys no more to saye/ but that yt ys all one thige afore god whether thou be bõde or elles a freman: Lyke as circumcysyon and vncircumcysion are all one thynge. Nother of them doth let thy fayth and salvacyon: As though I shulde saye/ In fayth yt ys all one mater whether thou be poore/ or elles ryche/ a yonge man or an olde/ fayer or foule/ lettred or vnlettred / a laye man or elles a spretuall (as ys wonte to be sayde) whyte or elles blacke For he ẏ is called being poore is a fore godryche. And he ẏ ys called

(beyng

a longe man is aunciēt in the syght of god. And he that is called beyng foule and missefavored/ is a fore god fayer ād beautyfulle. And he that is called beyng vnlerned/ is afore God right coninge and well lerned. And he that is called beyng a laye man/ ys before god a pryste. All this is bycause that fayth doth make vs all afore god egalle and lyke. Ne doth yt suffere division of states or persones to be of any value. In lyke wyse also here when he sayeth: he that is called in the lorde beyng a seruante is the lordes freeman. This is a smoche to saye/ that he is no lesse recounted a fore god / then yf be were free/ and no servante. Contrary wise/ he that ys called beyng free/ is Christes servante/ ẏ is to saye/ he is no better then a servante. Here cometh well in place that Paule saieth Galat. iij. Here is nother Jewe/ ne Greke/ nother bonde/ no fre/ ther ys nother man ne womā for all are one thinge in Chryste Jesu/ ye Chryste ys all and the whole in all thīges. We have all one fayth/ one god/ one inherytance/ and all thinges are egalle ād lyke. Thus mayeste thou cōclude/ he that is called beyng a mā/ is a fore god as a woman/ and she that is called beyng a woman is before god as a man. Wherfore this worde Christes servante in this place can not be spoken of service that is done to chryste/ but yt signifieth a servante that is here set vnder

me in this worlde. Whiche for so moche as he also belongeth vnto Christe and lyveth vnder hym ys of like reputacion vnto god as yf he were free. Ye he ys even christes prope seruante/in that he serveth hys master diligently/ and faythfully for Christes sake and acordynge vnto his commaundementte.

ye are dearly bought: see therfore ye be not the ser vātes of men.

¶ What meaneth he bi this: he hath shewed before/ that servātes ought to abyde in their states/ wherin they are called. And yet doth he here forsende / that we shulde be servantes. But ye shall knowe that he doth here some what breke of / and make a litle digression from his fyrste mater/ gevinge as yt were a generalle proverbe or feate sentēce agaynste all humayne lawes and tradicions. So that not withstādinge this digression ys so pety/ that yt is in manner no digression. For he taketh occasion vnto the same of that which is spoken immediatly before. He sheweth before what libertye is graunted bi the doctrine of Christe vnto Christianes as concerninge for matrimony/ād howe that fayth maketh all states ād thinges egalle. Whiche libertye & egalnesse caussed by fauth/ mennys tradicions do destroye/ and avoydinge libertie do combre mens

nes consciences bryngynge them in to a strayte. For he that teacheth that a Christen body maye not mary with an vnchristyan and so dwelle together (whiche thinge the Popes lawes are not adouted to do) the same letteth and fordoeth thys lybertye that is here ordeyned and spoken of by Paule / and causeth that people do rather obeye them / then God or elles his worde. And thys doth Paule in thys place calle servyce of men / when he sayeth / be not the servantes of men. In so doyng thynke the people / that they be the servantes of God / and do obeye serve and honore him. When not withstandynge they attendinge and folowynge the doctryne of men are made only the servantes of men.

The same wyse did they that preached / that Christen men ought to be circumcyded / wherby they dyd infrynge / and spoyle excedynge many men of spretuall liberty / whiche false teachers he doth myghtely improve and blame in all his Epistles / for the more parte: but specyally in that whyche he writeth vnto the Galatyans / and in that he writeth vnto the Romayns. Thus dyd thys blyssed Apostle alwaye dylygently and fyersly fyght for the mayntenance of Christyan lybertye agaynste the snares / trappes / bondage / and imprysonmente that

G 8 misbound after H. 7

Jesus is Christ and beleve in thy harte that god hath reysed hī frō deth thou shalt be saved. Where by confession is meante witnessinge in wordes ād dedes outwardely / lyke as in harte we do truly byleve of god/and his wordes inwardly. Besyde forth in all other thinges he geveth the libertie that after thine awne wille thou mayste do all thinges with out all icopardie of cōscience. In so moche that he careth no thinge at all / as concerninge for him silfe / all though thou diddest forsake thy wyfe/runne fro they lorde or master/and shuldest forsake all manner covenantes that thou makiste with all men. For what avayleth it hym yf thou doest this thinge or ȳ / or elles doest omitte and leave them vndone?

But forso moche as thou art herein bōde vnto thy neghbore/vnder whose power/and dominyon thou art put / God wille not that by his lyberrye thou shuldeste invade and spoyle an other mannys goodes But he wille that thou shalte kepe covenātes/and promyses that are made with thy neghbore/for all be it that as belonginge vnto him silfe he taketh smalle regarde for soche thinges/not withstandinge he doth yet care for thy neghbores sake. And that is his meaninge when he sayeth. Before god. As though he shulde saye / Afore man or afore thy neghbore I do not make or sette the free

For I will not spoyle him and take the a-
waye frō him whiche art hys proper goodes
& possession/vntille ẏ time that evē he hī silfe
shall make the free. But before me art thou
dymissed and made free. So ẏ thou canste
not perisshe or be dāned/what so ever thin-
ge thou shalt outwardly other do/or elles le-
ave vndone. Marke therfore this liberte wel
& divide it accordingly So that thou vnder-
stādeste ẏ matter to go otherwise be twixte
god/& the then it goeth betwixte ẏ/& thy ne-
ghbore/for in the firste parte ẏ is to saye bet-
wixte god & the is libertye: but in the secōde
that is betwixte ẏ and thy neghbore is none.
God gyveth the this libertye in thyne awne
goodes/but not in ẏ goodes of thy neghbor
There is it necessary for the to make division
be twixte thy goodes and thy neghbore. For
this cause maye not a mā forsake his wife/
for his awne body is not his awne/but it be-
longeth vnto his wife/& is hers. And con-
trary wise as cōcerninge of ẏ womā. In like
māner also a bonde mā/or a servāte hath no
power over his awne body/but is vnder the
power & authorite of his sovereine or master
God as cōcernīge for to his awne silfe wol-
de not great ly care/if a mā did forsake his wi
fe/for ẏ body is not bounde vnto god/but is
gevē of hī to mā frely vnto ẏ vse of all exteri
or thinges. But inwardely in ẏharte is mā
bounde to God Bargaynes and promyses

made vnto men ought to be vniversally accomplissshed. The very conclusion herof is: That we owe nothinge vnto any man / saving love only / and thowe love to be servisable vnto oure neghbore. Where love is / it ruleth / ād claymeth by authorite (with out all ieoparde of conscience or of synne before god) to eate to drinke to be clothed with all manner of garmentes / to vse this / or elles that manner of lyvinge indifferently / savinge where they shulde hurte my neghbore and be against his profyte. Against god in soche manner of thinges can not one offende / but thou maiste against thy neghbore / onles thou doest vse them ryght. Moreover ỹ by this worde / callynge / is not here signified the state in whyche every man ys called / And as yt ys vsually sayde. Matrymony ys thy callynge / Thy callynge ys pryesthode / and forth in rowe of other. Every man hath hys proper callynge of God. Of soche callynge doth not Paule speake here / but he noteth the Evangelike callynge / that is by the Evangely. So that thys sentence / Abyde in ỹ callynge wherin thou art called is thus moche to saye. In what so ever state ỹ evāgely shall take ỹ / in what so ever mānere mā ỹ it shall finde the. Se ỹ in ỹ same thou doest abide. Yf it calle ỹ being maried / cōtinue so stille / abidinge in ỹ same callynge or state / wherin yt dyd fynde the. If it called

the being a ſeruante/abyde in the ſeruyce in whiche thou warte called.

What: Yf then yt ſhall take me in a ſynfulle ſtate/ſhall I ſo ſtille abyde ād remayne? I anſweare: yf thou be in faith and charite/that is to ſaye yf thou be in the callinge of the Euangely. So what ſhalle pleaſe the. Do thou then ſynne hardely: But by what wayes ſhalte thou can ſinne/ yf thou have faith ād charite? For by fauth we muſte pleaſe and ſerue God/and by charite oure neghbore. Therfore it cā not be/that thou ſhalte be called in a ſynfulle ſtate/ and there in remayne/for yf thou doeſt ſo remayne/ other thou art not yet called/ or elles thou haſte not receaued thy callinge/for this callinge doutcleſſe cauſeth that thou muſte departe from out of a ſynfulle ſtate in to an other/that is ſynles and doth altre the in ſoche wyſe that thou canſte after do no more ſynne/all though thou ſhuldeſte abyde in thi firſte ſtate. And all be it that thou be then clerely on all parties free afore god/yet afore men muſte thou by charite be every bodyes ſeruante.

Here doeſt thou ſee thē agayne/that cloyſters and monaſteryes which are now a dayes do fight agayne right and equyte/ for they bynde them ſelues vnto god in exterior thinges/in whiche they be clerely free/and ſo do they ſtrive againſte god/fauth/libertye/

and goddes ordinaunce. And agayne wards wherin they ought to be bounde / and be ſerviable vnto every man by charite / there do they make them ſelves free / and wilfe vſe libertye. So that they will not be ſervyable ne profite any mā / but them ſelves. In whiche manner of doing they reſiſte / and withſtande the truthe. O what weywarde / and diſordered ordres be theſe / whiche wille pervert / and deſtroye all the ordinances and lawes of god / deſyringe to be free in ȳ they ſtande bounde and to be bounde where they ſtande free. And yet not withſtanding they clayme of preſumpcyon to have thrones or ſeates of excellente honoure in hevē / dyſdayninge the places ordeyned for other comone Chriſten people. Ye they ſhalle occupye ſeates that are apointed for them in the deppe dongone of helle which ſo doth maſke of hevenly libertye develiſſhe bondage / & of corporalle ſervitute curſed lybertye.

¶ The thirde parte which entreateth of vyrginite.

As concerninge vyrgins I have no cammaundemēte of the lorde / yet I do geve councelle as one that hath obteyned of the lorde to be faithfulle. I ſuppoſe that it is good for the preſente neceſſyte / for it is good for a man ſo to be.

¶ We have hether to harde matrimony plē teously magnifyed and prayſed/let vs nowe heare the paynes and trobles therof/ & of the dignite and honor of virginite. This wil le Ihere note vnto yow fyrſte/ onles yt had bene ſaynte Paule that here doth entreate ther of/ yt myght greve men that he ys ſo che a ſpare prayſer therof/and that he doth ſo ſlenderly commende yt. Fyrſte he ſayeth that yt ys not commaunded of god/no mo re than ys matrimony/that ys to ſaye/yt ys lefte of god free for every perſone. And in that ys taken awaye the honor/whiche oure greate preachers have ther vnto a fore thys tyme attributed. For where ys no comma undemente/there ys lefte before god nother meryte ne mede/but a ſole lubertye. Yt ys of lyke eſtymacion afore god/ and all on mat ter whether thou be a virgyne or no virgi ne. And as he ſhewed before: He that ys cal led beyng a ſervante ys the lordes freman. Lyke wiſe maye be ſayde here: She ẏ is cal led beyng a mayde is before god a wife And ſhe that is called beyng a wyfe / ys before god a mayde. For all theſe thinges before god are all one nother ys there any differen ce of perſones/ne meryte of dedes/ but only fayth whiche ys egalle and lyke in all / and by all thinges.

Paule bycauſe that virginite is a dere ād precious thinge and of greate authorite in

the erthe spake thys by the holy goost/to the tent that no man for ỳ preeminence and soveraynte of the state shulde iudge hym sylfe better and more excellente before god then an other symple chrysten body: but that he shulde cõtinue pure in fayth which doth make vs acceptable in the syght of god. For the corrupte nature of man can not abyde/ as a man wolde saye to be vntwynded ād to be counted nothinge in value a fore god / and therfore the more excellente that hys worke shall be/the more excellente reioyseth she to appeare. Wherfore she is so blynded with the goodly glysteringe of virginite. Seyng that there ys no thinge more of pryce/ne more glorified apon erth. That she demeth no state to be so soverayne as yt. And so proceading she thynketh in hys mide suerly that lyke as in the worlde a virgyne doth excelle a maryed body/even so shall yt be in heven.

Here in have yow both vttered / and also overthrowen the dyvelyshe doctrine of the braynles and dotynge doctores or preachers of the devyll whyche do forge syngular coronettes for nonnes and all virgunnes in heven / callinge them the spouses of Chryste. As though other Chrystyan people were not the spouses of Chryste. myserable and folysshe youth hearynge

thys lewde preachinge runneth who maye fasteste covetyng to fylle and replenissh heven with vyrgines and the spouses of Christe. In the meane season Christian faith ys forgotten and not cared for/ but suppressed and quenchidde. Whiche notwithstandinge all only doth finally obtayne this crowne/ and maketh the spouses of Christe. But knowe thou well this/ and be thou suer that of soche crowned vyrgines (that truste in these doctrines/ and by reason of soche opinions do shewe and pretende virginite /dyspysinge/ or slenderly regardinge this doctrine of Paule) is not so moche as one founde pure or remayninge a virgine / and fynally that ys a vyrgyne or elles the spouse of Christe.

Furthermore he sayeth accordinge after his faythfulle and trusty advysemente that virginite is good for this presente necessite. This is the firste cõmendacyon that Paule bringeth of virginite. And here mayste thou see what goodnesse Paule did meane of before in the beginnige of this chapter/ whē he sayede / yt is good for a man not to touche a woman. For he wryteth not here one worde of merite / mede/ or rewarde that we shall have in heven.

But he spake of transitory goodnes ād cōmodites of this lyfe /as here after we shalle see more often. This is then a good cause to

continue in virginite and to eschue mariage whiche is full'e of troble and miseries. That alwaye over the shulders of a Christian body hangeth redy for love of the Evangely persecucyon / and he is every houre as men are wonte to saye sette as it were betwixte ỹ hāmer & ỹ stethy so ỹ he must put in ieoparde hys goodes/his fryndes/& his lyfe other to be dryven & taken awaye/or elles to be slayne. And this doth Paule here call'e presente necessite.

But now where I beseche yow shall' one canne finde so moche as one virgine in all' the cloysteres of the Popes kingdome(for in soche doth he principall'ye reygne) ỹ lyveth a virgine for soche a cause? For then possessions/lyfe/and companye be made so sure/ and safe by so many and so grete pryvyledges/and authorites both of kinges / Emperoures/and of Popes that never a fore en to this daye was any people in the worlde more safe / or more sure. So that every man muste nedes knowledge & graunte that these do not lyve virgynes for cause of necessite/ or of any ieoparde / but only for love of sykernesse / assurance/and savetye/ and that no necessite shulde ever touche ne assayle them. Whiche thinge is cleane cōtrarye vnto the cause alledged here of Paule / for yf everywhere in cloysteres & monasteries necessite/ and persecucō shulde be loked for/ye shulde

se expressely that where as now are redy byl-
ded a thousande and a thousande cloysters/
shulde vnnethes be one stocke or studde But
what shall I nede tarye any longer aboute to
declare yow this. It is playnly set a fore the
eyes of all mē / what necessyte and peryll e
cloysteres/their god the pope / with all his
officers/mynisters/clyentes/and accessari-
es do suffer / other in body / or in goodes.
They be all in a grosse sume saryne and so-
wes that are masted/pampered/and fedde
delicately.

But thou wylte here obiecte agaynste me
Maried people ought to be in peryll e and
necessite for the euangely/as well as virgi-
nes or vnmaried persones. For as the euan-
gely ys vnto all people comone/so muste al-
so the crosse and persecucion be. For Abrahā
was in necessite ād to gether also with/him
his wife Sara/whiche when he had forsa-
ken hys father and hys goodes or substance
was caused to be alwaye put in ieoparde of
deth: I make answere. Yet for all that doth
not Paule commaunde that any persone for
cause of that necessite shulde te bounde to
abyde syngle and vnmaried. But he sayeth
yt is good and profitable so to abyde . Thys
necessite that Paule doth here speake of is a
comone thynge. But virgyns be in better ca-
se to abyde ād endure yt then are maryed fol-
kes. For yf Abrahā had ben without hys wi

se Sara/he shulde have had lesse/troble la-
bor/and care/and shulde in cõclusyon have
escapyd with more ease the perylles and leo-
perdes yͭ he was in. A virgyne is only one
body/ & hath no nede to care for ony other.
But maried folkes do abyde to gether & are
ioyned the one vnto the other. Here in ys
moche troble care thought & studye lyke as/
experience doth abundantly shewe. But at
this thynge I thynke many wylle be displea-
sed/ frowne/ and wax angry seyng that they
so longe tyme have causelesse kepte chastite/
& yet before god shall' be no better then all'
other. But in so doyng you shalle see yͭ they
be yͭ solisshe virgines whiche dyd spylle their
oyle/ by cause yͭ they dyd lyve & cõtinue vir-
gines not of pure Chastian minde / but for
love of mede/ reward/ excellẽcy/ honor/ and
glorye. And they do not reckẽ that yt is good
so to abyde virgines as Paule doth here saye
& meane yͭ ys good/ but they dreame yͭ they
shall' obtayne therby some good thynge in the
lyfe cominge. And thus have they made of
their virgilite marchãdise/ yͭ they shall' there
by have lucre & winninge before god/ & wyl-
le not be cõtẽte with yͭ trãsitory goodes that
do come of chastite & eternalle inheritance
purchased by fayth. Wherfore soche muste
here with be neades offended & displeased
For beside yͭ they shalbe disapoynted of the
preeminence that they loked to have had in
heven / yt was also very greyous / payn

fulle/ād laborous for them to kepe this chaſtite vaine and damnable.

Art thou bounde vnto a wyfe: ſeke not to be looſed. Art thou looſed from a wyfe? ſeke not a wyfe: But ād yf thou take a wyfe/thou haſte not ſinned/like wiſe yf a virgine marye/ſhe hath not ſynned: Nevertheleſſe ſoche ſhall have trouble in theyr fleſhe: but I faver yow.

¶ Here haſte thou both that it is no ſynne to mary/ne yet to lyve vnmaried. The Apoſtle entendeth principally to informe mēnes conſciences/and afterwarde to ſhewe what is moſte expedient & beſte for people in this worlde. And wherfore to lyve vnmaried ys good/he doth here deſcribe with wordes of greate gravite ſayng: Maried folke muſte have troble in the fleſhe. And this is the crye/& noyſe/that all the worlde doth make/ſpeake/and wryte of/touchinge matrimony/that no man whiche loveth to lyve at eaſe & pleſure maye gyve him ſilfe to be maried/for in it is moche troble vexacyon/miſerye/evyll dayes/ād adverſite Which all they that are virgines & vnmaried do not feale/& be without. But I that am as yet vnexperte. And that have had none experēce of matrymony

nother wille/ne yet can/here reherse ād recken ẏ paynes/grefe/and laboures/that ther of come.

Neverthelesse I gyve here credence vnto Paule. And of scripture I have lerned. ij. tribulacions of mariage. The firste is whē god spake vnto Adam. Genesis. iij. sayrge. In the sweate of thy vysage shalte thou eate thy brede/ and with the penury or barennes of the erthe shalte thou norisshe the in the dayes of thy life. There was misery put apō mankīde to mayntene ⁊ norisshe both him silse ⁊ his wife. Here is faith assayled sharpely/ ⁊ put vnto no lytill plūge For what agrevous burdon do they bere when they be pinched and wrōge with penury? Be side what a vexaciō is it for thē to beholde the missfortunes that be falle both vnto thē selves/ ⁊ also vnto their household ⁊ family/with the iopardye ẏ they do dayly stande in/of losinge both godes ⁊ cattelle? Finally what angwisshe do they suffer/seing ⁊ feling the wilenesse/and falsshede of mē amonges whō they are cōpelled to lyve ⁊ company with? Thus muste he humble hīsilfe moste louly/keping hī quiet ⁊ stille/ ⁊ brouke or disgeste doune many evill vexacions/and that principally because he is bounde in wedlocke with a wife/whiche thinges all he shulde lytelle or nothinge nede to regarde/yf so he were loose ⁊ stode free. Forthermore the womānes myserye

and affliction is to bere childer / to be delyvered of them in paine / and to bringe them vp in laboure and travayle / to reste or slepe litelle in the night / to be strayte and harde vnto hir silfe / and to forsake all hir felicite or pleasure. Whiche thinge she shulde have no nede to do / yf she hadde lyved a mayde. And this beside all experience dyd God him silfe shewe vnto Eve in the .iij. chapter of Genesis sayng: In payne shalte thou bere and bringe forth children. The other tribulacyon of maryage is / that sainte Peter touched sayng: That a woman is weacke & a bryttelle vesselle. So that the husbande muste suffer / and forbere many thinges in hyr: yf so they wille lyve in reste and concorde. For faute of this we see that ioyfull matrimony (in whiche peace doth reygne and love) is a seldome founde thinge. Agayne warde the woman ought to be subiecte and obedient vnto hir husbande / as thou seyste Genesis .iij. to go forth after him / to abyde and be with him whersoever it shall please or like him. So that she muste nedes many tymes brydelle and breake hir awne wille. If beside forthe thou desireste to knowe of other incōmodites / & troble ẏ is in matrimony / thou maiste yf so thou wilte axe of thē ẏ have assayed it / or elles assaye it thy silfe. I suppose verely ẏ these .ij. be wondfulle greate tribulaciōs. And the more greate / by

people be chaste in by mennys tradycyons.

That thys ys here the mynde of Paule/ confermeth well the other parte of hys proverbe/whē he sayeth yow be dearly bought. In whych he sygnyfyeth Christe/ that with hys precyous blode hath redemyd and delyvered vs from all synnes and lawes/as is clerely shewed in hys Epistle to the Galathyans .v. chapter. Now was thys byeng ād redempcyon done not after the worldely fassyon. Nother be here made leages and covenantes / soche as are betwyxte men: soche as be betwyxte the servante and the master/the wyfe and hyr husbande. All' soche bargeynes doth he let stande stille/willinge that they shulde be kepte / and observed. But this redempcyon ys done inwardlye by the spirite in mennys conscyences: So that no lawe can eny longer binde vs or kepe vs bounde: But here are we all in all wyse franke ād free. Afore we were kepte bounde and locked in synne: but now are all synnes fordone/broken / & destroyed. But yet all bondage or lybertye exterior doth stille abyde and remayne/and is nother synne ne goodnes or merite: but a certē exteryor ordre of thinges in due frame and proporcyō of trouble and solace/payne ād ioye/ lyke as all other exteriors and outwarde thinges be.

This is GB misbound

In whiche on both sydes we maye lefully passe thorow oure lyfe wyth out synne.

Brethern let every man wherin he is called / therī abyde with God.

Here doth he now the thirde tyme repete his conclusion of christianlybertye. That all exterior thinges before god are free/ and that a Christen body maye vse them accordinge after his appetite or pleasure/ other levinge thē or eckes takinge them. And he adderh expressely/ before god. That is to saye as concernige vnto thy silfe and vnto God. For thou doest not honor vnto god in this that thou art coupled in matrimony/ or eckes that thou abydeste vnmaryed/ that thou art a servant/ or eckes that thou art a freman. In that thou art made this thinge or that/ or eckes doest eate this meate or ȳ. On the other syde thou doest not displease him / nother doest thou sinne yf any of these thinges thou shalte do awaye and leave undone. And to telle yow shortly. Thou owveste nothinge vnto god/ but fayth and confession / when I here / saye confession. I meane not that whysperinge of synnes in to ȳ prystes eare/ whiche is called auricular confession/ ne yet the confessiō of thy sinnes vnto god/ but I meane as sainte Paule doth Roma.x. sayēge: Yf thou shalt knowledge or confesse with thy mouth/ that

cause they cōprehēde in thē many other. But yet is all this nother sinne ne offense before god/but only a tēporalle incōmodite/vexacion/ & misery the which he muste nedes fele/ ẏ other lusteth or elles by necessite is enforsed to be ioyned in matrimony. And with out doute ẏ apostle hath therfore here touched these greves/ & vexacions of matrimony/lesse ony parsone shulde for cause of thē dispise ẏ state/as though it pleased not god or in which god could not be served. Like as vnto this daye oure false prophetes have bē wont to do. Whiche have in maner put all worshuppinge of god / & good dedes/out of this state/callynge maryed people / secular laye /worldely / yee and the very worlde yt silse/and other that lyve vnmaryed/but yet not all chaste spretuall ecclesiasticalle / and the churche. As though they only were spretualle & the churche. And the maryed were not so /but the cōtrary/yee they calle the vnmaried the knightes of god/goddys servantes/the spouse of god & soche other names which it is pitye to se howe farre they be disagreyng frō their dedes & cōdicions. What elles is this then in so avauncinge thēselves in ẏ they be vnmaried to teache that in mariage mē can not be lyke ? Ne do the same that they do beyng vnmaried.

Therfore Paule lesse the virgines & vnmaried shulde by his saing take occasion so to

rouse & magnifye the silfes vnto the disho-
nor of mariage/doth here meruelously tẽper
& modifie his wordes saing. Suche shall ha-
ve trouble in their flesshe. Marke how expre-
sly he speaketh saieng trouble in flesshe/not in
spirite. For trouble of ỹ spirite is sinne & evyll
conscience. But trouble of flesshe is exterior
paine/grefe/woo/& vexacion: And ỹ Paule
after the mãner of the hebrew speache doth
here calle the flesshe/we do calle the body.
So that trouble of the flesshe is as moche to
saye as trouble of ỹ bodye. I meane not that
it is in the body as a disease/or malady is
in the body. But that trouble is in these thin-
ges whiche we daily occupye/vse/ãd be cõ-
versante with/and in all that belongeth vn-
to the body/as are our wife/chyldre/house-
holde/house/lande/cattelle/and other mo-
vable goodes/and all mãner matters or bu-
synes that we have to do with men in this
ungracyous worlde.

A man therfore vnto whom is geven the
gifte of chastite hath nede to kepe in and re-
straine his curiosite/ãd beware of matrimo-
ny/and not to put him silfe in soche trouble/
and misery. Onles necessite doth compelle
him/like wise as Sainte Paule doth faith-
fully here geve counceil and alwayes ought
the same to be stiffe geven. For it is a very
greate and excellente fredom and libertye to
be vnmaried/exempte from moche ãd many

cares/trouble/misery/and vexacyons. Whi-
che libertye Paule doth forbydde or envye
no parsone saying. But I gladly do favor
you. Beholde yf this is to preache virginite
truly/not to bringe forthe and alledge the ex-
cellencye therof/and mede or deserounge be-
fore god: but to cõmende the tranquillite &
quiete/that therby doth come in this worl-
de. For a man shall fynde some that of curi-
osyte only and rassheries are copuled in ma-
trimony with out all necessyte/that else
myght well have bene with out maryage.
Whiche being uncompelled do stryve/wres-
tell/and labour to gette and obtayne my-
sery. When they have yt thus once purchased
and obtayned/they be then truly not unright-
fully dealte with all/but served acordigly

This saye I brethern the ty-
me ys shorte/yt remayneth that
they whiche have wifes be as th-
ough they had none: and that they
that wepe be as though they we-
pt not: and that they that reioyce
be as though they reioysed not:
And that bye/as though they po-
ssessed not: And they that vse this
worlde/as though they vsed yt
not/for the fassion of this worlde
goth away.

¶ This is a comone rule for all christē peo-
pir that they shulde kepe and observe there
everlastinge goodes and treasure/which they
do possesse in faith: and that they might de-
spise and take light regarde of this life. So
that they be not drouned over depe in love or
pleasures/ care/or fylthynes therof/ & that
they shulde here lyve/and order thē silfe as
palmers or pilgrymes of the worlde vsinge
all thinges while they be in this shorte pas-
sege of lyfe presente / not for voluptuousnes
and pleasure/but as is required of necessi-
te. And this is to have a wife as though
I had hir not yf with desyer of mīde I had
rather wante and be with out hir. Neverthe
lesse by cause of avoydynge synne/she is vn-
to me necessary / & I have nede of hir. But
he that seketh in hir not only necessite / but
also pleasure and volupte this man shall ri-
ghtewesly be sayde not to have a a wife: but
to be possessed and had of a wife. The same
wise ought a christē man to do in all other
thinges: that is to wyt only ease supporte/
and succurre with them his necessite / & not
to folow his appetite/ pleasure/and volup-
te or & pāpre/ & fede in thē his olde adame

I wolde have you with out ca
re. The single mā careth for thin-
ges of the lorde/how he maye ple-
ase the lorde: but he that hath ma
ried careth for thiges of the wor-
lde/howe he maye please his wife

There is difference betwene a vir gyn ād a wife. The single womā careth for the thinges of the lorde that she may be pure both in body and also in sprete: but she that ys maried careth for thinges of the worlde/howe she maye please hir husbande.

¶ Here is shewed an other cōmodite & profite ẏ cometh of chastite in this worlde. That they maye ẏ more intētively care & study to do godly thinges & goddes service I meane not in reding/soundīge of organes/& singīge/like as now a dayes supersticious/religious & cloisterers are wōte to do amōges whō is al ẏ very service & honor of god suppressed & quēchidde: But that by a blisshed quietnesse a mā may sticke harde & geve diligēte attēdāce dayly vnto ẏ worde of god in redinge prayng/& alwayes talkinge therof/& finally in preachīge it: accordinge as paule doth exhorte .i. Timo. iiii. for a parsone ẏ is maried eā not geve hī silfe thereunto wholy: but ys distracte therfore & divided/ẏ is to saye: he hath nede to spēde a grete parte of his lyfe so to order hī silfe ẏ he may acordīgly live with his wife: and is like as Martha was/combred & intāgled with many charges/& moche bussynesse. A maide or an vnmaried body is not distracte & so divided in to diverse chars

ges or cares/but she may wholy geve hir sil-
fe vnto godly and divine thinges:

Yet doth not the apostle intende to dam-
ne matrimony/though here he saye ẏ a ma-
ried parsone doth not only take care for the
worlde: but also that he ys in a maner divi-
ded from god/and endureth moche care: So
that he can not continually praye / study/or
speake the worde of god. For all though truly
soche a parsones care ꝛ laboure be not evill
Neverthelesse it had ben more profitable for
him yf he had abydden loose and free both
as concerning for prayer / and also for trea-
tinge and speakinge the worde of god / fur-
thermore in vtteringe the worde of God he
maye do profite/and conforte many mē/yee
all christendome. So this ought to be even
a very mighty ād an excellente cause to pluc-
ke backe every parsone that hath the gifte of
chastite from maryynge. But oure spretuall
people whiche nother knoweth the wayes to
praye ne yet teacheth ẏ worde of god/but on-
ly do tormēte thēselves after the forme of mē
nis statutes ꝛ tradiciōs shulde do better/thē
they have done before time ye /ꝛ that not a lit
le better / yf they were maried. And whiles
they do now mūbylle/houle ꝛ singe in chir-
ches/they did diligētly enforme / nurtre/or-
dre/ꝛ rule their wife ꝛ their childre that they
shulde live according to the institucio of god
declared in ẏ scriptures/ ꝛ so provide ẏ they

might have meate/drinke/ād clotinge acor-
dinge for the necessite of their body.

This speake I for your profite and not to tangle yow in a snare: but for that which is honeste and comly vnto you. And that you maye quietly cleave vnto God without distraction or separacion.

¶ That is to saye I do not cōmaūde chastite/but I leave it vnto your libertie: nother do I so councelle it to be receaved/ ẏ you ought to be ashamed/ if you do chose to be maried rather then to lyve chaste and vnmaried. For I wille have no parsone ītangled there with/or bounde ther to. I do only saye & afferme ẏ virginite is a free/a good/ād a profitable thinge. He that wille & can take yt maye take it/ & lyve therin. Here do yow see that in this mater ought to be layed no trappe ne snare: ne no mā ought to be vnto chastite strayned & enforced nother by cōmaūdemētes or lawes/ne yet by vowes & promises. Now is this a suer mater/ ẏ these wordes ar writtē of Paule vnto all Christē people of Corinthe vniversally/ & not only to the vnlettred or laye. And yet he alledgeth no mede nor merite of virginite before god/but only ẏ it is good & profitable for people livinge in ẏ worlde/ & this only doth he prayse ād commende in it/ as you have largely heard

shewed before.

yf enyman thynke that yt ys vncomly for his virgyne yf she passe the tyme of mariage/and yf so nede requyre/let hym do what he listeth:let them be coupled in matrimony.

¶ This is a moche wonderfuffe texte/ that a man may gyve his virgyne or his mayde to be maryed only for avoydinge shame or skornīge wich do therof growe/ ẏ in some countrees yt hath be thought vncomly/ yf a man shulde kepe hys virgyne vnmaried over longe/or beyonde tyme of mariage. Beholde here as saynte Paule wolde have every persone in thys poynte free/and to do that shulde be good and profitable for them. He sayeth therfore yf so nede requyre / That is to saye/yf it cā be none other wyse/ and the manner of yowr cowntry be so/and the custome doth with yow so requyre that yt be shame for a man to reteyne and kepe hys vyrgine vn tyffe she waxe aged/let hym then do what he lyketh. Let hym bestowe hyr in mariage/or effes let hī dyspice & set nawghte by shame. And thus to teache ys verely not to esteme exceedingly of virginite/ne to recounte yt over gretly deare and precious. For the Apostle doth here gyve leave vnto a mā to bestowe and put forth his vyrgine to be maried for love of avoydinge a lytle shame or skornīge. I wene he was ygnorāt of golden dyademes and crownes/ whiche god is boūde to gyve vnto ẏ merite of virginite/ly

ke as oure masteres do faine/ & have ymagined

Neverthelesse he that purposeth surely in his harte havinge no nede/ but hath power over his awne wyll: ād hath so decreed in his herte/ that he wyll kepe hys vyrgen/ doth well.

¶ A lytelle before whē he sayde: yf any mā thinke ẏ yt is vncomly for his virgē. &c. And also in this place whē he sayeth. Neverthelesse he ẏ purposeth & hath decreed in his harte ẏ he wylle kepe his virgē/ yow muste vnderstāde ẏ he speaketh of parētes/ fryndes & of tutores in whose warde and custody the vyrgēs be. In whiche thinge is signifyed ẏ mēnys chyldre ought not of their awne rasshe mīdes to binde thē other vnto mariage/ or yet vnto syngle lyving ād chastite. But ẏ these persones vnder whose tuicion & authorite they be put ought to bestowe thē in mariage/ or elles to reteyne & kepe thē therfro. But yf so be ẏ soche do lacke/ or elles take no kepe or regarde of thē/ then maye they do as they lyke. And that he doth here speake & bringe in/ of the power of his awne wyll/ yt ought to be so vnderstāde/ that no mā hath power to reteyne & kepe his virgine frō mariage against hyr wylle. For whē she will not/ thē hath he no power over his awne wylle. In lyke māner yf any other cause were that he shulde of other men be enforced to put hyr forth and bestowe hyr in mariage/ as in example yf he shulde be

eshamede that his virgen were over moche growen in age/or elles that he shulde be constrayned of his frendes/or of some rulers to cause hyr to be maryed. In all soche causes ought he not to attempte any thynge agaynste hyr wylle.

So then he that ioyneth hys virgen in mariage/doth well And he that ioyneth not hys virgen in mariage/doth better.

¶ Here agayne is expressely shewed authoryte and power geven vnto fathers/and mothers/tutors/& fryndes over their chylder/and over them/whiche are committed vnto ther protection/and custody. That the chylder with out the wylle or consente of their parentes/and of other whyche have cure over them/maye nether marye or elles abyde vnmaryed/furthermore yt/hath bene sufficiently expounded vnto yow before that this worde/and better/whiche he doth here speake of/and that ys also spoken of before in this presente chapiter ought to be vnderstonde of goodnesse in this worlde. So that yow shall knowe matrimony to be good/ys ys to saye with out synne/acceptable vnto god and free for every persone/But yet chastyte/and synglelyfe is more quyet/& hath more liberty.

The wyfe ys bounde vnto the la-

we so longe as her husbande ly-
veth. yf her husbande slepe she ys
at libertye to mary with whome
she wyll/only in the lorde but she
ys happyar yf she so abyde in my
iudgemente. And I thinke vere-
ly that I have the sprete of god.
¶ Thys place doth he also reherse Rom. vij.
and therof he maketh a spretuall'e allegory/
whyche he doth here omitte/and leave out/
but there he declareth yt largely. The ende &
conclusyon of this chapiter ys: That ma-
trimony in the syght of the worlde ys a bō-
de and thraulde thynge: but before god yt ys
ryght franke and free. Lyke as he sayde befo-
re of a servante/that he ys free a fore god/
all be yt that before the worlde he hath no
power over his awne body. But syngle and
vnmaryed folke be free both before god/and
also the worlde/and holden captyue of no
man. Therfore he calleth the state of so che
better/or more blessyd/then ys the state of
thē whiche are maried: Not bycause of co-
myng to eternalle salvacion and blysse/whe-
re vnto fayth only ys good ād precious/bet-
ter and more precyous acordīge vnto ẏ me-
sure therof/but touchinge vnto this presente
lyfe and cause of yt/for so moche as in cha-
stite and syngle lyving ys lesse/ busynesse/
care/charge/ ieoparde/ & laboure. Therfore

grosse and contente of this chapter is: It is good not to mary/excepte necessite constrayneth and causeth the contrary. And there is necessite where as god hath not geue the noble gyfte of chastite/ for no man newoma is create vnto chastite: but all ar create/ & made to engrendre and begette yssue/and to suffer the troble/and myseries of wedlocke/as ys shewed Genesis. ij. C. iij. But yf any parsone maye be reckened/and nombrede from out of this necessite/that all mankinde is create vnto him hath not nother lawe ne vowe nor yet any purpose of minde exempte therfroe/ but the grace of God only/and his marvelous hande/or power. By whiche yf man be not made continent and chaste. I do not denye/but they maye begynne to lyve chaste: but it shall never come to a good effecte and ende. Wherfor they playe the cruell tyrannes and soule murderers/that do barre in and shutte youth vp in cloysters/there keping them in by vyolence/ As though chastite did consiste in oure power/when notwithstandinge they both thinke and also in themselves fele the contrary. And sothey bringe other to that/whiche they did never touche so moche as with one of their fingers/ nor yet & though they wolde never so fayne. It is shortely sayde/Be chaste. But why thou art thou o fornicatour? It is a playe mater you may be suer. Thou shalte farse/and stuffe thy body with delicate meates & drinkes/in soche

a manner that yt shalbe a mayne draffe sac-
ke or swylle belly/ and then put or enioyne
me to faste all the dayes of my life/ and to
kepe abstinencye. Finally vnto them that be
attentyfe and wylling to heare/ have I in
thys treatyse sayde/ and written sufficient:
But as concerninge them that haue no luste
but disdayne to heare/ what cā or elles maye
men saye: I beseche god to illumine them/
and lende vnto them his lyght/ or elles to
lette and forbydde them that (as a fore thys
they have done) here after they maye no len-
ger slee and murdre mennys soules.

Amen.

¶ Paule to the Hebrues. xiij.

¶ Let wedlocke be had in pace in all poynt-
tes/and let the chāber be vndefiled/for ho-
re kepers and advoutrars god will iudge.

Paule. i. Corin. vi.

¶ Fle fornication. All synnes that a man
doth are with oute the bodye. But he that is
a fornicatore synneth agaynst his awne bo-
dy.

Paule. i. Corinthiorū. vij.

¶ To avoyde fornication/Let every mā ha-
ve his wiffe/And let everye womā have her
husbande.

Christ Mathei. xix.

¶ He that made mā at the begynnenge ma-
de them man & woman/for this thinge shall
a man leave father ād mother and cleve vn-
to his wiffe/& they twayne shalbe one flesh
wherfore now are they not twayne/ but one
flesh Let not mā therfore put a sūder ẏ whi-
ch gode hath coupled to gedder I say ther
fore vnto you/whosoever putteth away his
wiffe(excepte it be for fornication) and ma-
ryeth a nother breaketh wedlocke.

Paule To the Ephesians. v.

¶ So ought men to love their wives as
their awne bodyes/ He ẏ loveth his wiffe
loveth him silfe. For no man ever yet hated
his awne flesh. But nourssheth & cherissheth

Leffe.ij.syde.j.line.xij. præsumptiou/read
presumption.
Leff.ij.sy.i.li.xxvij.en/read in
Leff.vi.sy.i.li.xxvij.exhortinge/read exhors
tinge.
Leff.vi.sy.i.ly.xxx.trluly/read truly.
B.iiij.syde.ij.line.xij.tobles Reade trobles
B.vi.sy.ly.i.vij.incōtinēcye maketh not &c.
Reade.incōtinēcye did not withstonde & let
it for cause were of let every mā have his wi
fe Paule maketh not &c.
B.vi.sy.i.ly.xx.to ordre behave him silf &c.
Read to ordre & behave him silf &c.
B.vi.sy.ij.ly.v.is only savegarde.Reade is
the only savegarde &c.
C.i.sy.i.li.xv.then/reade them.
C.i.sy.ij.li.xij.yowe/read youre.
C.iiij.sy.ij.ly.xxiij.and.xxv.spōses/read spou
ses.
C.v.sy.i.ly.xiij.it is not oure power Reade it
is not by oure power:
C.vi.sy.ij.ly.xxi. And al his liffe longe Rea.
yee and that all his liffe longe.
C.vij.sy.i.ly.xxi.driveth/read dryve.
C.viij.sy.ij.ly.xx.heten/read hethen
D.iiij.sy.i.li.xv.their/read there.
D.v.sy.ij.li.xvij.other ech/read/ ech other
D.vi.sy.ij.ly.xxviij.beore/read/before.
D.vij.sy.i.li.v.iuggkinge/read.iugglinge
D.vij.sy.i.li.xiiij.the all/read all the
E.i.sy.ij.ly.xvi.forechaste Reade fo-

E.ij.sy.ij.ly.xviij.preckinge Reade pryckinge
E.iij.sy.ij ly.xiiij.keptiste reade kepiste
E.iiij.sy.ij.ly.xxi.mochage reade mockage.
E.vij.sy.ij.ly.xv fram reade from.
E.vij.sy.ij.ly.xxi.werre reade are.
E.viij.sy.ij.ly.v.voytsave reade vouchesave.
F.ij.sy.ij.ly.iij.exawples reade examples
F.iiij.sy.i.ly.ij.the.reade them
F.iiij.sy.i.ly.xvij.fattherly reade fatherlye
F.viij.sy.ij.ly.xv.io reade to
F.viij.sy.ij.ly.xxxi.will shall graunte geve reade will geve.
H.i.sy.ij.ly.xxv.for to his awne silf &c.reade for his awne silfe &c.
H ij.sy i.ly.xx.and forth &c. Reade and so forthe.

¶ At Malborow in the londe of Hesse. M.D.xxix.xx daye Junij. By my Hans Luft.

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